United Nations S/PV.7115

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7115th meeting
Friday, 21 February 2014, 12.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Bliss
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Panin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Simonoff

Agenda

The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on measuring the effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations system for the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations (S/2013/341)

Letter dated 3 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/75)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24232 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on measuring the effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations system for the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations (S/2013/341)

Letter dated 3 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/75)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/341, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on measuring the effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations system for the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/75, which contains the text of a letter dated 3 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I sincerely thank Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement and the flexibility thas has been shown during the nogotiations, which took a little bit longer than we expected. But we have succeeded with the Council's support. Certainly, for a beginner in the Council, we are absolutely grateful for having produced this product with members' help, insights and advice.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2014/5.

It is so decided.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7116

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7116th meeting
Saturday, 22 February 2014, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24253 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/115, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2139 (2014).

I wish to welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I very much welcome the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014). We are all keenly aware of the profound and prolonged desperation of the Syrian people. If this resolution is implemented quickly and in good faith, at least some of the suffering can be eased.

The resolution builds on presidential statement S/PRST/2013/15, adopted last year, and strengthens the Council's engagement in protecting civilians and ensuring the delivery of relief. The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Half of the country's people need urgent assistance. Host countries need support in caring for more than 2.5 million refugees.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. They are the daily victims of brutal violence and indiscriminate attacks, including the use of heavy weapons, aerial bombings, mortars and car bombs in populated areas. There are continued reports of massacres and atrocities throughout the country. Women and girls have been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

The Syrian Government and allied militias have been responsible for countless killings, disappearances, the horrendous use of barrel bombs and torture on a massive scale. Opposition groups have carried out summary executions, the recruitment of children for combat and the use of terror tactics in civilian areas. Attacks against civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, continue unabated. These heinous acts are unacceptable and must stop immediately. All combatting parties in Syria must abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law.

I commend United Nations humanitarian personnel, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and our other partners for their bravery and commitment. Despite the dangerous circumstances, United Nations humanitarian agencies and our partners are reaching millions of people. But too many millions are beyond our reach, and funding continues to fall short. I urge the international community to step up its contributions.

This resolution should not have been necessary. Humanitarian assistance is not something to be negotiated; it is something to be allowed by virtue of international law.

It is profoundly shocking to me that both sides are besieging civilians as a tactic of war. Some 200,000 people are under siege in Government-controlled areas, and 45,000 in opposition-controlled areas.

More broadly, this resolution highlights again the urgent need to end the conflict.

While the political process continues, we will continue to do all we can to provide relief and protection to people in need on the ground.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) on the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

The aim of the resolution is simple: it seeks to protect civilians affected by the conflict in Syria. It demands that rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access be authorized across conflict lines and across borders, so that humanitarian assistance can be conveyed along the most direct routes to the people who need it. It recalls that starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited under international humanitarian law. It reaffirms that those who have committed violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Syria must be brought to justice. Finally, it underscores the importance of finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

In recent weeks, along with our colleagues from Australia and Jordan, we worked to build a consensus around a strong resolution that would enable us to change the situation on the ground.

By adopting resolution 2139 (2014), the Security Council is sending a clear and unified message to all parties to the conflict in Syria with a view to ensuring that humanitarian access to all Syrians in need is guaranteed, that the siege of cities where civilians are trapped is lifted, and that an end be put to the senseless atrocities and indiscriminate bombings and to the use of barrels bombs, whose only goal is to the civilian population.

The requests that the Security Council made in the presidential statement adopted on 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15) unfortunately were not followed up on. The humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate at an unacceptable pace. Today approximately 10 million Syrians, half of whom are children, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. More than 3 million of them are living in areas that are difficult to access. More than 2.4 million Syrians, more than half of whom are children, have had to take refuge in neighbouring countries, primarily Lebanon and Jordan. Given that tragic deterioration of the situation, the Security Council had to act.

With today's unanimous vote, the Security Council is shouldering its responsibilities. Henceforth it is up to the parties to the conflict in Syria, primarily the Syrian authorities, to fully and swiftly implement the provisions of the resolution that we have just adopted and the provisions of the presidential statement of 2 October 2013.

The Syrian authorities must endorse without further delay the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex). The parties must work towards a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

The resolution includes provisions that will enable the Security Council to verify in a precise manner whether its demands have been implemented on the ground. The Council expresses its intent, in the case of non-compliance with the resolution, to take further steps to support the vital humanitarian efforts in Syria.

Today, to the Council's credit, international humanitarian law and the needs of the Syrian people have prevailed over the interests of those who cling to power in Syria. Luxembourg is proud to have contributed actively to this result. We sincerely hope that this will mark a turning point for the Syrian people.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): In adopting resolution 2139 (2014) this morning unanimously, all members of the Security Council have recognized that the humanitarian situation in Syria is desperate.

The country has disintegrated, and neighbouring countries are threatened by the effects. Almost half of Syria's population needs urgent assistance. A third of the housing has been destroyed and over 60 per cent of the hospitals destroyed or damaged. Almost a third of the people are internally displaced. Three million have fled; two and a half million are refugees; 2.3 million are now out of school; and one in five schools are either occupied or destroyed. Medical workers and hospitals have been directly targeted, and a majority of Syria's health workers have fled. At least a quarter of a million people scratch to survive in besieged cities and towns with no food or medical relief for over a year.

Dag Hammarskjöld famously said that the United Nations was not created to take humanity to heaven but to save it from hell. But by any measure, the Syrian people long ago descended into hell. It should not have taken the Council so long to take today's action, indeed, as the Secretary-General has just said, it should not have been necessary.

The Council has demanded that this resolution be implemented in full. If it is, it will make a difference to the lives of millions of Syrians.

The Council's core demand is that the Syrian parties to the conflict, and, above all, the Syrian authorities, reverse course now and start to put the interests of their own citizens first. The Syrian military must cease its systematic and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. The devastating aerial bombing campaign in Aleppo, which has seen a further 500,000 people displaced, must end. The use of barrel bombs — a weapon designed to create civilian terror and cause maximum injury to civilians — must cease immediately. Aid must be allowed to reach all those who need it by the most direct means possible, including across battle lines and across borders. It must be allowed to those people living under siege, and people in such areas who want to leave must be allowed to do so.

Armed opposition groups must also comply with the calls made in the resolution to end abuses of human rights, abide by international humanitarian law and facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance in the areas they control. The Council has said plainly that Al-Qaida and associated groups have no place in Syria and that all foreign fighters should leave the country.

We have acknowledged again that the only sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict is a political transition. The challenges are self-evident, but we must continue efforts to achieve this. And, as the Council has recognized in this resolution, there must be no impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights. Australia also reiterates its call for the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

The Council's unanimity today has been necessary, but it is not enough. The resolution can benefit the Syrian people only if it is implemented in full. The primary responsibility, as I have said, lies with the Syrian authorities. Others on the ground, including opposition groups, must also comply. The resolution is also binding on all of us. Council members and the wider United Nations membership must themselves do what they can to pressure the Syrian authorities and the opposition groups to implement it.

The resolution has made very clear the Council's expectations that its demands will be met and that there will be consequences for non-compliance. We will remain determined in this.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Jordan welcomes the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2139 (2014). Jordan is proud to have been one of its authors, along with Australia and Luxembourg, in implementation of an Arab Ministerial mandate. We negotiated the text of the resolution with the other members of the Security Council and made every effort to achieve the broadest possible consensus.

In that respect, we would like to thank all members of the Council, both permanent and non-permanent, for the good faith they showed during the consultations. We commend the Council's unified position.

The resolution just adopted deals with the various dimensions of the humanitarian tragedy in Syria, which is now untenable at the internal level. It does not only entail attacks against civilians by all kinds of prohibited and non-prohibited weapons, but it went even further by imposing a suffocating blockade on many regions of the country, which has led to starvation and widespread violations of international humanitarian law throughout Syria, some of which amounted to crimes against humanity.

According to the statistics, nearly 9.3 million Syrians need humanitarian assistance, of whom 6.5 million are internally displaced persons. In additon, 250,000 Syrians are trapped in besieged areas and almost 2 million Syrians require humanitarian aid in regions that are difficult to reach. The negative consequences of this internal humanitarian tragedy has gone beyond Syria's borders into neighbouring countries, thereby creating an international problem of humanitarian refugees. That has affected all aspects of economic and social life in, and the security of, those neighbouring countries. The number of refugees who have been forced to leave Syria has reached 2.9 million people, with 2.4 million having found refuge in neighbouring countries. In Jordan, we have welcomed 1,300,000 refugees from Syria — 600,000 since the beginning of the crisis, almost three years ago. The cost of hosting those refugees amounted to $1.7 billion in 2013. That is expected to rise to $2.8 billion in 2014.

Such negative consequences for the neighbouring countries will have a long-term impact, which will require an effective approach by the Council and the international community towards the Syrian refugee crisis. The continuing humanitarian situation of such a dimension threatens the security and stability of the Middle East. How the Council approaches the humanitarian situation should therefore not depend upon politics. We reaffirm that this resolution should

not negatively affect the political aspect but should strengthen and reaffirm that element, as reaffirmed in paragraph 15 and the eleventh preambular paragraph of the resolution.

We underscore the importance of the parties to the conflict in Syria now immediately and fully implementing all the provisions of the resolution. All parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, must allow humanitarian relief operations through borders and through lines of fire. The parties must immediately begin to dismantle the blockades imposed on certain towns and regions and must put an end to all attacks against civilians, in particular in residential areas, including aerial bombardments and the use of barrel bombs.

The Council will closely monitor the commitment of the parties to the conflict in fully implementing this resolution.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the unanimous adoption of this resolution on humanitarian acccess in Syria resolution 2139 (2014). Given the tragedy taking place, which has been escalating daily for three years, the contrary would have been incomprehensible. How could the Council have remained silent in the face of 140,000 people losing their lives or 3 million Syrians without humanitarian assistance and the desperate flight of nearly half the population, who are now refugees or displaced?

The resolution was urgent and necessary. That is why from the beginning France supported the draft text initiated by Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg, to whom we express our gratitude. This urgent resolution demands that the Government of Syria, carried away by its own violence, respect international humanitarian law and stop bombing civilians, starving its people and torturing prisoners. It demands the immediate lifting of sieges. It demands that the Government authorize humanitarian organizations to help all those in need across the front lines and borders. It demands an end to attacks on United Nations personnel, humanitarian actors and journalists.

This crucial resolution must put an end to the deafness of the Syrian Government to the appeal by humanitarian actors and the Council, which on 2 October made specific demands for the provision of humanitarian access. We must all admit — and that is the reason for the resolution — that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) did not produce tangible results. Far from reaching all those in need throughout Syria, humanitarian assistance remains inaccessible in besieged areas and sporadic in areas that are difficult to reach.

The Syrian regime is trying to make us believe that it is a reliable and responsible partner in the humanitarian sphere. The examples of evacuations from Moadamiya and Homs a few weeks ago show us the opposite. Far from being ideal, they were slow in implementation, limited in effect and tragic in their follow-up. Many of those evacuated were arrested and are still missing. For some days, the Government has stepped up media reports of local ceasefires. Let us not be deceived: such ceasefires are imposed on scared, exhausted and starving people as part of a deliberate policy pursued by the Government for people to starve to death or surrender.

At the same time, the Syrian Government is using increasingly barbarian and deadly bombs against the civilian population. After the cluster bombs, ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, the authorities are now launching barrel bombs against civilians — the ultimate weapon of terror. The use of such weapons is not a detail, as some people have said. They have no military justification. They seek only to kill civilians and combatants indiscriminately. For the thousands of civilians who die as a result of those bombs and for the hundreds of thousands of civilians who flee terrorized, it is not a detail. France welcomes the courage and determination of the Syrian people. We cannot abandon them in the hands of those torturers.

With the adoption of this resolution, the Security Council avoids the dishonour of silence. It is now up to us collectively to ensure that the parties to the conflict, in particular the regime, heed the strong and urgent message conveyed to it and translate the Council's requests into specific actions.

I wish to underscore the intention expressed by the Council to adopt additional measures if the resolution is not implemented. We will therefore return to the Chamber in 30 days to hear the report of the Secretary-General and, if the Syrian Government remains deaf to our demands, we should take the necessary measures. France will not forget about the meeting.

The humanitarian suffering can be resolved only by means of a political transition. We cannot accept an end without follow-up to the discussions in Geneva. There again, it is the Syrian regime that bears the

responsibility for the failure by refusing the agenda for the talks proposed by Mr. Brahimi and accepted by the opposition. It is up to us to show collectively the same urgency and resolve. France will continue to stand beside the Syrian people. Criminals should pay for their crimes.

Ms. Power (United States of America): At long last, the Security Council has spoken clearly and unanimously about the devastating humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Syria. For a body that has long been too divided to acknowledge even the basic facts of the horror in Syria, today's resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) is a long overdue and altogether necessary step towards reality.

Whatever has or has not transpired in the Security Council for the past three years, the Syrian people have had the grave misfortune of living in the real world. That real world is what was captured in this week's report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — that more than 173,000 people are believed to be trapped in Ghouta, including several thousands who have hardly any food and have been given permission by the religious authorities to eat cats and dogs. That real world is what was recounted recently by the Secretary-General, when he informed the Council of the unspeakable abuses being committed against children, including kidnapping, sexual violence, beatings with whips, electric shocks and imprisonment without cause.

The real world in Syria today is a medical system that has collapsed; a school system that barely functions; a city of Aleppo that once had 5,000 doctors and now has some 36; a country where a quarter of a million people are trying to survive in neighbourhoods under siege, 2.5 million are refugees and 6.5 million are displaced; a country with countless hungry children, untreated infections, shrapnel wounds and lost limbs; a country where some mothers are denied the nourishment they require to sustain the infants that they hold in their arms; and a country where the bombs continue to fall, the shelling goes on and the agony deepens.

Some say that all of that is the inevitable consequence of war. I say it is the result of actions intentionally and wilfully taken by specific individuals, and what those individuals have the power to do, they have the power and responsibility to stop. I refer to the Syrian regime, led by Bashar Al-Assad, who has put his devotion to preserving power above the welfare of tens of millions of people. I refer to him and his security forces, who pummel civilian neighbourhoods with barrel bombs, his snipers who delight in picking off children who are walking with their parents so as to watch both suffer unbearably, and I refer to terrorist groups like Al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, who in the name of revolution have, in parts of Syria, imposed a new terror on Syrians, supplementing Al-Assad's dictatorial fanaticism with religious fanaticism.

The resolution adopted today and the day-to-day reality in Syria are not about politics or ideology. We came here as representatives from around the world to do what we could to try to help people who are in desperate need of help to live and breathe as we do. That is all.

It is remarkable to the world that it has taken three years for the Security Council to recognize basic facts and to call for such basic principles of humanity — simply that Syrians in need should not be held under siege, that they should not be bombed by barrel bombs and that they should not be starved. It is a gross understatement to say it should not have taken this long.

The resolution is important for two reasons. It has a clear demand for specific and concrete actions, and it is a commitment to act in the event of non-compliance. It was a difficult resolution to agree on, but it should not have been. Many of the issues that come before this body are complicated. This is not.

It is because the United States believes that civilians should not be starved, should not be bombed and should not be denied access to the most basic things required to sustain life that we welcome today's action by the Security Council. It is now our fervent hope that the Council will show similar courage to ensure that our unanimous demands result in changes to ease suffering, especially for the hundreds of thousands of civilians who have been encircled by snipers and trapped in besieged communities. Our goal here today is to ensure that help is received by people who will die without it and that innocent civilians are not killed while waiting for that assistance to arrive.

It remains to be seen whether our action today will have the beneficial results we intend. Given its track record to date, the Syrian regime can be trusted only to deny what it has done and lie about what it will do. Accordingly, I call upon all Council members and all members of the international community to join

in pressing Damascus — and any actor who fails to comply — to fulfil the terms of the resolution on a comprehensive and urgent basis. There should be no more broken promises, no more delays and no more coupling minor concessions with crimes that are so horrific, so systematic and so recurrent that they have lost some of their power to shock the conscience.

Today, the Council has achieved consensus. Now we must insist upon action. Our common security, our common humanity and our collective conscience demand nothing less.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council decided relatively recently to consider the humanitarian situation in Syria, and only after it became clear that attempts to use the deterioration of the humanitarian situation to effect regime change were unsuccessful.

The Russian Federation supported the resolution just adopted (resolution 2139 (2014)) because, in the process of negotiating its text, many Russian considerations were taken into account, and the resulting document was thus of a balanced nature.

The main aim of international efforts concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria, including today's resolution, is to improve the situation in Syria and facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population in need. In order to achieve that, all parties must cooperate with international humanitarian agencies. Those agencies, in coordination with the Syrian authorities and with the active assistance of the Russian Federation, are carrying out difficult, painstaking work in very difficult conflict conditions.

That work has seen positive and concrete results, although not as quickly as we would have liked. There has been a gradual opening up of the population centres. Recent examples include the southern suburbs of Damascus — Yalda, Babila, Bayt Sahm and Aqraba — where until very recently, residents were firing weapons against soldiers. They are now patrolling with them and pooling their efforts to combat banditry and terrorism. The established ceasefire in Barzeh and Moadamiya is important. Thousands of civilians have returned home. Progress is being made on the reconstruction of the infrastructure in all the population centres mentioned, and soon there are going to be functioning medical centres and schools.

Progress in improving the difficult situation for civilians has shown the value of effective humanitarian operations and of providing support with the coordinated action of all participating parties. That experience needs to be expanded to other areas of Syria as well. There need to be agreements on localized ceasefires, access for humanitarian supplies and the exchange of prisoners.

There have also been other advances. An air bridge to provide humanitarian access to Qamishli has been organized. Humanitarian terminals have been opened. Vaccination campaigns against polio have been successfully carried out throughout the country, reaching over 3.4 million children.

Despite the difficult conditions on the ground, areas that are difficult to access in Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Hama and Dayr Al-Zour and Raqqa have received more than 51 convoys. Work is under way to normalize the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian Al-Yarmouk camp. However, the armed rebels in Syria are continuing to plunder convoys, kill humanitarian workers and attack civilian facilities, using civilians as human shields and carrying out terrorist attacks. There is still no way to provide assistance to the besieged areas of Nubul and Zahra, besieged by the rebels, in Aleppo, Fuah and Kifarya in the Idlib governorate, Adra in the suburbs of Damascus, and the northeast province of Hasakah.

Similar activities by the opposition to undermine humanitarian operations must be swiftly and firmly condemned by all members of the international community. We believe that the resolution appropriately assesses such actions, and the appropriate signals will reach those who are sabotaging humanitarian efforts in Syria.

The resolution adopted today focuses on the need to provide humanitarian access based on a mutual, unpoliticized and impartial approach and in line with the guiding principles of the United Nations in the area of providing humanitarian assistance. That fully applies to the provisions of the resolution regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance across front lines and the borders of neighbouring countries. We believe that humanitarian workers will adhere to those rules and the Secretary-General will bear this in mind in his reports to the Security Council. We trust that Syrian authorities and the opposition will implement the

resolution appropriately by freeing besieged areas and so-called remote regions.

The Security Council, irrespective of the progress achieved by this resolution and its implementation by all sides, can consider further steps. However, we would like to underscore that the resolution does not provide for an automatic imposition of sanctions — the Security Council would not have allowed that.

The resolution once again draws attention to the fact that, given the lack of a political settlement, the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate. We believe that an improvement in the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, just as a solution to the problems that are causing the ongoing and bloody conflict in the country, will be possible only through a comprehensive political settlement. That is possible by ensuring sustainable progress in negotiations among the Syrian parties based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/522, annex). That document is based on the understanding that decisions on fundamental matters of developing the Syrian State will be taken by the Syrian people themselves, based on mutual consent. Only decisions taken in such a way can be viable and lead to the settlement of the conflict in the country, which has already suffered so much.

A central element of the resolution is its strong anti-terrorism component, which is in line with the June 2013 declaration adopted by the Group of Eight Heads of State and Government meeting at Lough Erne. It calls on all Syrian sides to break with terrorists. In that regard, we underscore the need for the opposition groups not only to assume their responsibilities but to support the fight against terrorism in Syria in order to eradicate the problem and to work together with the Government to overcome that challenge.

We believe that the Security Council should swiftly proceed to discuss a further draft document on countering terrorist activities in Syria.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), on Syria. Today, the Council has finally shown that, whatever its political differences over Syria, it was not entirely indifferent to the devastating humanitarian crisis. We applaud the efforts of Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg in leading the negotiating process.

It has been nearly three years now since the Syrian people bravely stood up to demand their legitimate and universal rights. Since then, Al-Assad has waged a brutal war against his own people. He is responsible for the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world and some of the worst human rights abuses in the world.

Four-and-a-half months ago, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) that was designed to alleviate the humanitarian impact of this conflict. The Council urged all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to take a number of specific steps to improve access and to protect civilians. But not only has that statement been roundly ignored by the Syrian regime; the situation has got drastically worse.

My Russian colleague suggests that there has been humanitarian progress, but the reality on the ground tells a very different story. There are now 9.3 million people in need — an increase of more than one third since 2 October. Over the same period, the number of internally displaced persons has risen by 50 per cent, to 6.5 million people. And an estimated 140,000 people have been killed since the crisis began — an increase of 40 per cent since six months ago.

Last week, Valerie Amos came to the Council and laid bare the scale of this humanitarian crisis (see S/PV.7109). She called on the Council to take urgent action to improve the reach of humanitarian organizations. Today, the Council has answered that call. We hope that the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) will lead to action on the ground, bringing some relief to the millions of Syrians in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The resolution demands that the Syrian regime lift the siege of besieged areas, end the abhorrent and indiscriminate use of barrel bombs in populated areas and allow the United Nations and its partners to deliver aid across borders. The Syrian regime must immediately comply with those demands. To cite just one example, more than 1 million people in the most extreme need would immediately benefit from United Nations aid delivered across borders. The Security Council will review the humanitarian situation every 30 days and, as the resolution makes clear, we fully intend to take further steps if the demands set out in the resolution are ignored.

Although this resolution is an important step forward, we know that only an outcome on the political track will provide a lasting solution to the humanitarian

crisis in Syria. The United Kingdom will intensify its support with our allies for the "Geneva II" process to bring about a political settlement of the conflict in Syria. The international community must apply the same sense of unity in support of the Geneva II negotiations as it has shown today.

The message from the Council to the Syrian regime is clear: end the killing of your own people; stop the aerial bombardment, in particular barrel bombs; lift the sieges; and allow humanitarian aid to reach those in desperate need.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina would like to express its gratitude to the delegations of Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg for driving this initiative forward and for their efforts to achieve a consensus text, in which they conducted themselves with openness and transparency. We also wish to highlight the constructive attitude taken by all members of the Council, who, despite their different positions on the situation in Syria, managed to put unity first and agreed to speak with a single voice to help alleviate the grave humanitarian crisis afflicting the Syrian people.

It is clear that neither the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), despite its binding character, nor the various initiatives undertaken by the United Nations and the international community to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria have been able to attain the results we sought — insofar as the violence and killing have not stopped, and almost half of the population of the country is now in need of assistance.

The number of victims, while hard to pinpoint, is nonetheless compelling, demanding that the Security Council fulfil its institutional mandate, historic responsibility and moral conscience by ensuring it is not an obstacle but an instrument up to the task of helping reverse this tragic situation by taking new and more effective decisions.

The reports we receive week after week bring us to the realization that Syria and all of its people — especially the weakest and most vulnerable: women , young people and children — cannot and do not deserve to continue to be torn apart in the spiral of violence, cruelty, suffering, death, fear, despair, pain, slaughter, desolation and hunger. Nor do they deserve to be plunged into the even more chilling darkness of feeling that their suffering will never end.

While it is true that there have been some recent positive developments — such as the Homs ceasefire agreement, access to the Yarmouk camp, the positive results of the polio-vaccination campaign, the greater flexibility from the Government in issuing visas for humanitarian workers or the progress in establishing humanitarian aid distribution centres for in Aleppo and Qamishli — all of those things, even though they can be taken as encouraging signs, are clearly insufficient. We say this because, at the same time, flagrant violations of international humanitarian law continue unabated, as do deliberate attacks against people and property that are under specific protections — aid workers, medical personnel, patients, hospitals and schools. Indiscriminate attacks continue, with no distinction being made between civilians and combatants, as do horrendous sectarian massacres, such as that which occurred in Ma'an on 9 February. Without a doubt, these bleak events do nothing to slow the shocking deterioration of the humanitarian situation; on the contrary, their effect is to exacerbate the downward spiral.

Argentina voted in favour of resolution 2139 (2014) based on the conviction that the Security Council must assume its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations and explore all means and actions that may have a positive impact on the ground in order to alleviate the suffering the Syrian people and help the countries of the region affected directly by the consequences of this crisis, who have not shied away from accepting thousands of people on a daily basis, the vast majority of whom are fragile, frightened victims.

The resolution adopted today contains elements of great significance for Argentina, of which I will mention only a few. I underscore the fundamental importance of ensuring unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance. We must emphasize the responsibility to protect civilians, combat terrorism in all of its forms, call upon all of the parties to put an end to violence, ensure respect for human rights and for the norms of international humanitarian law, and urge the Syrian people to demonstrate, through pacific means and dialogue, their will to live in a society that respect life, preserves diversity and safeguards its cultural heritage.

As we reaffirm Argentina's commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, we reiterate that the fight against impunity and the full applicability of international humanitarian law and international human rights law

are not an obstacle to peace but, rather, an indispensable prerequisite for achieving it.

Along the same lines, we reiterate that those responsible for serious crimes and crimes against humanity must be held accountable for their actions and brought to justice. We also believe that humanitarian assistance is urgent and crucial and that the suffering and deprivation experienced by the Syrian people are a consequence and not the cause of the conflict. We fully agree with those who believe that there can be no military solution to the conflict, only a political one. Death cannot be resolved by causing more death, said our President in this very forum.

Only through an inclusive political dialogue without preconditions or extortion can the Syrian people move forward and find a path that will lead them to lasting peace and security. For that reason, we reiterate our call on all parties to make a decisive commitment to the negotiations begun in Geneva last month and the need for the principal regional and international players to help create the conditions necessary for all of the different actors in the Syrian conflict to overcome their differences through peaceful means, dialogue and substantive agreements.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina said at the Security Council meeting at which resolution 2118 (2013) was adopted:

> "With today's resolution, the Council is finally assuming its responsibility for stabilizing the situation in Syria and contributing to achieving a lasting peace, reaffirming the strength of multilateralism as a cornerstone of the collective security system established by the Charter of the United Nations as the world's only guarantee against the hegemony of might-is-right." (see S/PV.7038, p. 13).

Argentina believes that this resolution, which focuses on the humanitarian emergency affecting Syria, can in no way be used as an excuse for any unilateral use of force, nor can it give rise to militarization as a way of resolving the conflict.

Allow me to conclude by recalling what Pope Francis said on 7 September 2013, in a homily calling for dialogue and reconciliation in Syria. I am sure that the words of Pope Francis convey with deep simplicity the silent cry of the victims:

> "We have perfected our weapons, our conscience has fallen asleep, and we have sharpened our ideas to justify ourselves. As if it were normal, we continue to sow destruction, pain, death. Violence ... lead[s] only to death ... Peace expresses itself only in peace."

We hope that this resolution, the step we are taking today, will help to achieve this much-needed, long-sought-after objective.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over the past three years, the Syrian conflict has continued to escalate, causing heavy casualties and serious loss of property, as well as the displacement of millions of civilians. China is seriously concerned at the ever-worsening humanitarian situation in Syria and sympathizes with the Syrian people who have sustained profound suffering. The current humanitarian situation in Syria must not continue.

China supports the efforts made by the international community, especially the United Nations, to ease the humanitarian situation in Syria and appreciates the contribution made by neighbouring countries in hosting a large number of Syrian refugees.

China has on many occasions provided humanitarian assistance to Syria and the neighbouring countries through multiple channels and will continue to provide help to the best of its ability to the Syrian people, including Syrian refugees outside Syria, so as to ease their suffering.

As the core of the collective security mechanism, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The adoption by the Council of resolution 2139 (2014) is yet another unanimous action taken by the Council on the question of Syria since the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013) last year. This is the result of the common efforts of the members of the Council.

In the current circumstances, the actions taken by the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria should be objective, balanced and conducive to the maintenance of international humanitarian norms and of the momentum for the political settlement of the Syrian crisis.

Resolution 2139 (2014) reiterates respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, states the responsibility of all parties concerned in Syria for the improvement of the

humanitarian situation, stresses the imperative for all parties to abide by the guiding principles of United Nations humanitarian relief work, expresses support for the political settlement of the Syrian question and sends a unanimous and powerful message for the early improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria. As such, it is of great significance.

Going forward, the international community should ensure the implementation of resolution 2139 (2014). We urge all parties in Syria to set their sights on the interests of their nation and their people, comprehensively implement the resolution, fully cooperate with the United Nations and other organizations and make common efforts for the improvement of the humanitarian situation in their country. The international community should continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Syria and actively support the efforts made by neighbouring countries in hosting Syrian refugees.

Humanitarian measures can offer only temporary relief of the suffering of the Syrian people. It is only by seeking a political settlement to the question of Syria that it will be possible to achieve a fundamental improvement in the humanitarian situation in Syria. Thanks to the common efforts of all parties, including China, the second Geneva conference was held last month. That was an important step in the political settlement of the question of Syria.

Resolution 2139 (2014) gives fresh impetus to the political process in Syria. The question of Syria is complex and sensitive and not easy to resolve. We hope that the international community will insist on the political settlement of the question of Syria, insist on letting the Syrian people decide the future of their country themselves, continue to promote an inclusive political transitional process and continue efforts to foster the realization of national reconciliation and unity in Syria and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Syria and in neighbouring countries. We hope that the parties concerned in Syria will comply with this resolution, engage in dialogue and negotiations to establish mutual trust, meet one another halfway and draw on other useful experiences so as to reach a settlement on the basis of the claims of all parties that is in line with the national conditions of Syria and that accommodates the interests of all parties.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible member of the international community, China will continue to make a positive contribution to the promotion of the early realization of the comprehensive, lasting and appropriate resolution of the question of Syria.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): The humanitarian situation in Syria is a consequence of the unabated brutal violence which has so far defied any logic or solution.

Syria's centrality to stability in the region underscores the imperative for the Council to act in concert to ensure rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance across the country. It is for this reason that Nigeria recognizes the imperative of supporting any peaceful initiative that seeks to alleviate the suffering of Syrians and leads to a permanent political solution to the protracted conflict.

We are confident that the collective action that we have taken today in adopting this resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) is a significant and giant step towards protecting the defenceless civililans, including women and children, in Syria, who continue to bear the brunt of the deadly confrontation between opposing forces.

We express regret that there was no consensus on the inclusion of a paragraph in the final text calling upon all States to refrain from transferring arms to the parties in the Syrian conflict, given that such arms could be used to commit or to facilitate Syria's violations or abuses of international human rights or humanitarian law.

Nonetheless, the adoption of this resolution today is a powerful and visible demonstration of the renewed commitment of the Council to work in the higher interests of the Syrian people. We expect that concerted effort to be replicated subsequently in the Council's future efforts.

We want in particular to commend Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg not only for their leadership, but especially for accommodating the views of Council members in the course of the negotiations.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by thanking the delegations of Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan for preparing this resolution (resolution 2139 (2014)) and for the flexibility that they showed in negotiating it.

Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), the Security Council has taken an important

and necessary step in helping to address the critical humanitarian situation in Syria, which deteriorates daily and which has tragically affected the Syrian people. The situation has had a serious impact on the neighbouring countries and has become a threat to international peace and security. A void has thus been filled, given that the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15) has not been implemented, nor did it lead to progress on the ground.

My delegation voted in favour of the resolution, which is a forceful message that obliges all parties to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, to ensure the protection of civilians and to establish specific measures on the ground to enable prompt, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the affected population throughout Syria.

We believe the reference to accountability before the law for those who have committed human rights violations and abuses to be of particular importance. For my delegation, the cases that could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

The resolution that we have adopted must be fully implemented in all its provisions. In the case of non-compliance, the Council should consider additional measures. In accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the States Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

It is our conviction that only through a political solution can we put an end to the humanitarian crisis. We agree with the call by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy concerning the need to seek such a political solution to the conflict. With that in mind, it is crucial to put an end to the militarization of the conflict, as stated in the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014). This resolution is a new landmark in the Council's work but also one that is long overdue. For nearly three years, the humanitarian crisis in Syria has deteriorated while the Council has been seemingly unable to take proper action to provide relief to the long suffering of the Syrian people. Hopefully, our unity today will ensure the Council's effective role in dealing with the crisis from this day forward. We express our appreciation to the authors of the resolution — Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg — for their advocacy of humanitarian causes.

The Republic of Korea voted in favour of the resolution, as it lays out important steps to alleviate the suffering of all civilians in Syria, especially those who are trapped in besieged areas. The resolution demands that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, promptly allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for all United Nations agencies and their partners, including across conflict lines and across borders. As we welcome the resolution, we are also aware that it will not end the conflict. We urge both parties in Syria to engage more seriously in political negotiations.

In that regard, we reaffirm our unqualified support for the mediation efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Special Envoy Brahimi.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Rwanda would like to explain its vote on resolution 2139 (2014), just adopted, on the humanitarian situation in Syria. First of all, I commend Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg for proposing this important resolution, which was necessary following the failure by all Syrian parties to fully implement the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15).

Rwanda voted in favour of the resolution because we are appalled by the worsening humanitarian situation on the ground, as reported on many occasions to the Council by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos. We are particularly concerned about the siege on many cities and populated areas in Syria, including the Old City of Homs, where innocent civilians, including women and children, were trapped for months without any access to basic humanitarian assistance.

Rwanda has on various occasions expressed its position on the Syrian crisis. Like all Council members, we believe that there can be no military solution to the conflict. We reiterate our call on all parties to remain engaged for a peaceful and political settlement through the ongoing second Geneva Conference on Syria, which is the only viable solution that will end the security, political and humanitarian crisis in Syria.

It is in that context that we deeply regret that the important amendments on the responsibility of States that are supplying weapons to the Syrian parties were not included in the final version of the resolution. Those

reasonable amendments, based on agreed language, merely expressed grave concern at the negative impact of the transfer and use of weapons in Syria in terms of loss of life, security and stability. The amendments also underlined that the increased arms transfers to all parties in Syria hurt the prospect of a political settlement to the conflict, and called upon all States to refrain from transferring arms to the parties in the Syrian conflict when they assessed that they would be used in committing crimes.

It is therefore a shame that, after three years of a conflict in which over 100,000 people have been killed, 6.5 million have been internally displaced and 9.3 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, we instead continue to supply more and more weapons. We therefore urge that the Secretary-General's call be heeded, as he has been telling us to stop fuelling this conflict with deadly weapons and, rather, use our influence in convincing both parties to make significant progress in the Geneva peace talks. I think that is very wise.

To conclude, we hope that, unlike the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), resolution 2139 (2014) will be fully implemented by both parties, including through the lifting of the siege on all cities and populated areas and the granting of full access to humanitarian assistance.

I have the feeling that the Syrian crisis has been gravely undermining the credibility of the Security Council for three years now. Nonetheless, following the resumption of the peace talks and the ongoing process for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, which was all facilitated by permanent members of the Council, we express the wish that they will use the same influence to ensure a significant improvement on the humanitarian front.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Chad welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), on the humanitarian situation in Syria, following lengthy negotiations in which everyone made commendable efforts to reach a compromise. We thank the Security Council members who took the initiative to promote this resolution, which will certainly contribute to relieving the suffering of the civilian population of Syria, who have been attacked with barrel bombs, besieged, displaced and become refugees.

Chad is very aware of the humanitarian issues in Syria, and we hope that the implementation of the provisions of the resolution will enable the population to have access to the humanitarian assistance that they are unjustly deprived of. The Syrian authorities are called upon to put an end to violence against the civilian population and violations of international humanitarian law and pave the way for true negotiations in order to reach acceptable solutions to the Syrian crisis.

We welcome the firmness shown by Council members and their commitment to the Syrian people, and we encourage the Council to continue efforts in that direction.

The resolution is a call on the Syrian parties to shoulder their responsibilities and prioritize dialogue in order to bring an end to the abuses that innocent civilians have fallen victim to. We believe that speeding up the destruction of chemical weapons and ending the use of barrel bombs would help create conditions conducive to a return to stability in Syria.

Chad supports the efforts of the international community in seeking a lasting solution in Syria, and resolution 2139 (2014) is a very important step in that direction.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

Lithuania welcomes the unanimous adoption of this resolution on humanitarian issues in Syria (resolution 2139 (2014)). The unanimous vote today is a message of vital importance for those Syrians who have been for long months desperately waiting for humanitarian assistance: that the Council is ready to step up its efforts in addressing one of the most horrendous humanitarian situations of this century.

For too many Syrians, this moment of Council unity has come too late. What has transpired during the three years of mounting atrocities defies description. Yet today we have a moment of hope — hope for those under siege, hope for those watching their loved ones succumb to starvation and hope for those living under the constant threat of aerial bombardments, mortar attacks and barrel bombs.

We strongly hope that today's unanimous vote by the Council will make a tangible difference in addressing the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people and ensuring rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

It is now up to the parties to the conflict to act immediately and decisively to implement the resolution in full and to put an end to the horrific abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Compliance by all parties to the conflict, especially the Syrian Government, which bears the primary and ultimate responsibility to protect its population, is paramount. My delegation underlines that the Council should and must be ready to take the necessary further steps in the event that the parties to the conflict fail to heed the call of the resolution. The Council's credibility is at stake.

Let me also underline the importance of accountability for all the war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights that have taken place during these three long years. Impunity breeds violence and perpetuates conflict. Impunity cannot be allowed to continue. The Council must use the all tools at its disposal, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, to address the issue and render justice to the nearly 140,000 dead and the millions made refugees and displaced by this conflict.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I had wanted to welcome the presence of His Excellency the Secretary-General here with us, but he has now left the Chamber. I shall therefore proceed directly with my statement.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has been eager to improve the humanitarian situation of its people. Therefore, on the basis of its constitutional and international obligations, it has continued to work day and night to fulfil all the humanitarian needs of its citizens. In parallel to that, the Syrian Government has worked to restore peace and stability to the entire country.

The Syrian Government is fully committed to, and fully abides by, its international commitments, including its commitment to cooperate with the United Nations and its agencies in the humanitarian field, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the guidelines laid out therein, first and foremost of which is respect for the national sovereignty of States.

Accordingly, in the context of the Syrian Government's implementation of the presidential statement of 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), the Syrian Government has implemented a number of administrative and logistic measures that enable the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to expand their activities and increase their effectiveness. That would not have been possible had it not been for the cooperation of the Syrian Government and the measures it has taken to facilitate them as a full partner. I would like to give just one example in that regard, namely, the agreement by the Syrian Government to open a third air bridge to carry humanitarian assistance from the Iraqi city of Erbil to the Syrian city of Qamishli. That air bridge entailed 11 flights, while the first and second had 13 and 10, respectively. The Syrian Government has also offered to use its own air fleet to carry out those flights as a gesture of goodwill.

In addition to the partnership I have just detailed, I would like to remind the Council of the fact that the Syrian Government has borne the brunt of the distribution of humanitarian assistance in Syria. We have covered 75 per cent of such assistance, whereas United Nations bodies and other international organizations operating in Syria have covered only 25 per cent of the total amount of assistance distributed.

Certain Governments, some of which are members of the Council, have, in response to Syria's openness, cooperation and positive commitment in the humanitarian field, persisted in and maintained their campaign of deception, sowing doubts and spreading crude claims. That clearly reveals their evil intentions in principle against Syria. That has also revealed that some of them have sadistic intentions. They want to prevail in international relations at the expense of the pain, suffering and destroyed hopes of the Syrian nation.

Some States have exposed their deep frustration at the emergence of positive developments in the humanitarian and political fields. That frustration was reflected in destruction and terrorism. The Syrian Government has paid the price, and continues to do so.

In addition, there has been a campaign of increasingly provocative statements and inflammatory meetings to encourage and provoke, clearly and crudely, the armed terrorist groups, which are under the command of certain Member States. Those States sponsor and train the groups with a view to depriving

Syrian citizens of their daily bread and livelihoods. The Syrian people are left to sink deeper into suffering, as my dear colleague from Argentina said.

The fact that some members of the Council have sought to reduce the situation in Syria to a politicized humanitarian issue alone itself exacerbates the humanitarian crisis and trades on the suffering of the Syrian people. It is also a biased and subjective reading of the situation, which masks the serious interventionist agenda that seeks to manipulate the humanitarian crisis and mislead international public opinion. Suffice it to say that some members of the Council have objected eight times to the adoption of even a press statement denouncing terrorist acts that have taken the lives of thousands of innocent Syrian civilians. Those same States that are so very eager to discuss the humanitarian situation in Syrian have also refused to provide ambulances and wheelchairs for people with special needs.

The Syrian Government has long welcomed all sincere efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria and has cooperated positively with the United Nations. We also welcomed the presidential statement of October 2013 and abided by its provisions.

Humanitarian support to the Syrian people cannot be effective unless it is accompanied in word and deed by an end to the efforts to politicize humanitarian issues and an end to terrorist acts. The activities of the armed terrorist groups, including those associated with Al-Qaida, are the main cause of the humanitarian suffering of the Syrian people. Those armed terrorist groups systematically target infrastructure, destroying the country and bleeding it of its resources. In addition, they are intentionally targeting in a premeditated way humanitarian convoys, which they have repeatedly plundered. They have also attacked and killed several humanitarian workers, in addition to mounting attacks and blockades against a number of areas of Syria, depriving the civilian inhabitants of humanitarian aid for long periods. Such use of civilians as humanitarian hostages and human shields seeks to prevent the Syrian security forces and army from taking action against the terrorists.

In that context, the Syrian Government, like those of all other States Members of this Organization, is upholding its constitutional right and obligation to fight terrorism, which is indiscriminately targeting Syria. It is doing so based on international law and the resolutions of the Council.

Law enforcement is at the heart of State authority, and that includes countering terrorist activities carried out on our territory. No one can deny the duty of and exclusive right of the State to do so.

In addition to the terrorist activities I just mentioned, it is well known that the coercive unilateral economic measures illegitimately imposed by certain States against the Syrian people have had a negative impact on the livelihoods and living conditions of the Syrian people.

There is also the additional obstacle of the lack of humanitarian financing. The financing of the humanitarian response plan for 2014 has not exceeded 7 per cent of the required funding, in spite of the highly publicized conferences being held left and right. The amount of financing for the regional response plan for Syrian refugees has not exceeded 13 per cent.

The Syrian Government announced early on that it was serious and sincere in seeking to resolve the crisis through a political process built on dialogue with all political actors and civil, cultural and economic constituencies within the country, including the national opposition and those armed groups that lay down their weapons and give priority to the language of reason and law in order to preserve the country and safeguard its institutions. In that context, the Government has provided genuine judicial, security and political guarantees to those who wish to be involved in that national process. Indeed, the Government approach has led to concrete results on the ground in several areas of Syria. Recently, a number of local reconciliation processes have been implemented, sending a clear message to the world that the people of Syria are capable of resolving this crisis by themselves, free of any outside manipulation of their interests.

What we have just heard from a colleague — that the security forces arrested some Syrians following their surrender within the reconciliation process — is entirely untrue and I hereby deny it in front of all present. In that context, the Government is working round the clock to make sure that all service facilities in those areas will be ready to provide for the needs of the residents and to receive the remaining displaced persons who are willing to return to their homes to live in peace and stability. In the end, their homeland is the final refuge for its people, especially if we take

into consideration the fact that the suffering of Syrian refugees has become a political commodity to be traded crassly; likewise for the suffering, deteriorating health, living and security conditions and unethical indignities imposed on the Syrians living in refugee camps.

The Syrian Government has abided by all of the provisions of the presidential statement issued by the Security Council on 2 October 2013. I myself welcomed it a few minutes after its adoption. Many of its provisions are reiterated in the resolution just adopted by the Council. That resolution, in turn, clearly and unequivocally confirmed that international terrorism was being carried out by groups associated with Al-Qaida, after having denied, in an unjustified and incomprehensible way, its existence throughout the Syrian crisis.

The time has come for the Council to carry out seriously and firmly its duties in dealing with the roots of the humanitarian situation, namely, the terrorist activities perpetrated by Takfirist groups against civilians in Syria with the support of well-known Governments, individuals and entities that have become known to everybody — support in which the Israeli occupying forces are taking part publicly and with the knowledge of the peacekeeping department in the disengagement zone in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Delivering humanitarian assistance across borders can never be done in a manner that violates Syrian national sovereignty as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. Here we would like to warn against going beyond the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the guidelines for the provision of humanitarian assistance, creating the false impression that merely allowing cross-border humanitarian operations, with neighbouring States that are involved in escalating the humanitarian situation, supporting, arming, training and funding Daesh, Al-Qaida, the Al Nusra Front and the "Islamist" Front as well as others, would resolve and put an end to the humanitarian crisis for millions of Syrians — this is nothing more than a delusion, a parody of the children's bedtime story, "The magic wand", that is told to them to make them fall asleep. That is because these borders with some neighbouring States are the source of terrorism into Syria and bloodshed of the Syrian people.

Yes, as my dear colleague the Ambassador of Nigeria said, the violence has reached the threshold of nonsense and illogic, that is true. But the more important question remains, why is this happening in Syria, and why this unjustified silence concerning forms of the flagrant external intervention in Syrian internal affairs? The prevailing mentality among some, unfortunately, is that of a diplomacy of hyenas, not of international humanitarian law.

One last remark. A colleague stated that the Syrian Government delegation in Geneva had rejected the draft agenda submitted by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. I am here formally denying that, because I was there in the room and I approved the draft agenda one minute after it was presented. It was the other party that rejected the draft agenda, and you can ask the international mediator, Mr. Brahimi, when he meets with the Council soon, about the details of that story.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7117

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7117th meeting
Monday, 24 February 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24288 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and President of the Swiss Confederation, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Burkhalter.

Mr. Burkhalter (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me and for my country, Switzerland, to address the Council today as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I thank the Council for its invitation.

Switzerland has embraced its chairmanship of the OSCE with great determination and modesty, realizing full well that security is an art, and a difficult and fragile one, as the events in Ukraine are demonstrating once again — indeed, I shall dwell on that topic for longer that I had intended, as things there have now moved into a new phase.

Switzerland decided to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE for strategic reasons. We view the promotion of stability in Europe and its neighbouring regions, as well as in the fragile regions of the world, as a major axis of our new foreign affairs policy. We also believe that our tradition of mediation and good offices can add an enriching contribution to the OSCE.

We wish to contribute on the international front in order to demonstrate our responsibility and solidarity, which are two of the underlying principles of Switzerland's policy of peace and security.

With regard to the United Nations, our policy is also reflected in our decision to seek membership in the Security Council for the period 2023-2024, as well as in our OSCE chairmanship for a second time — Switzerland being the first country to do so.

This is also the first time in the history of the OSCE that two countries holding the chairmanship for a second time cooperate so closely — Switzerland this year and Serbia in 2015. We have together developed a joint work plan and we hope that this consecutive chairmanship will guarantee more continuity in the work of the OSCE. Moreover, we think that this continuity model should be instructive for the future.

It is therefore with particular pleasure that I address the Council under Lithuanian chairmanship, given that it was your Government, Madam President, that facilitated that innovative type of presidency at the Vilnius Ministerial Conference in 2011. Today, I will outline the priorities of our presidency by setting them off against the backdrop of the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. As chairperson-in-office, I want to strengthen that cooperation. I will also talk about the role the OSCE plays in international efforts to manage the crisis in Ukraine. That topic has strongly marked the initial phase of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE.

As the Council is aware, the OSCE is the largest regional security organization. It covers both the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. It brings together 57 countries, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as well as 11 partners, all the way to Australia. It takes its decisions by consensus. That is both a strength and, at times, a weakness, as we must constantly reach compromise in order to act. That is the spirit of cooperation that is at the heart of all the activities of the OSCE.

That spirit of cooperation is also reflected in relations with the outside. The work of the OSCE, as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, contributes to the efforts of the United Nations to maintain and re-establish peace, security and international stability.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently relaunched the debate on the revitalization of the role of regional organizations under Chapter VIII. We will organize a conference on that very subject in Vienna on 27 and 28 May, at which representatives from the United Nations and several regional organizations will participate.

The concept of multidimensional security that the OSCE has developed could inspire other regional actors. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 recognized for the first time that threats to stability and security not only came from troops and weapons but also — without reference

to any hierarchy — from economic crises, environmental degradation and human rights violations. Today, that comprehensive security model is more relevant than ever because it provides effective responses to current challenges and the security needs of the individual. We therefore hope to strengthen cooperation between the OSCE and other regional security organizations and the United Nations, always in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe is an example at the regional level. One week ago, the Austrian presidency of the Council of Europe and the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE jointly organized a conference aimed at strengthening institutional cooperation between the two organizations in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The conference was a success. A framework identifying concrete measures was developed that, among other things, provides for developing joint training to improve criminal prosecution.

With regard to relations between the OSCE and the United Nations, further cooperation should be envisaged on the ground. A successful example is undoubtedly the work carried out in Kosovo by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Mission.

Within the OSCE, we have launched a process of reflection with regard to further improving the efficiency of our field missions. The OSCE and its four specialized agencies carry out 16 missions — from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Kyrgyzstan — with a relatively modest annual budget of €145 million. To give an example, that is 15 times smaller than the amount that Switzerland devotes to internaitonal cooperation. We would like to introduce a new mission model that better corresponds to the specific needs of each host country. At the same time, we should ensure that we preserve the crucial preventive role played by our missions and that we safeguard the identity of the OSCE as a field organization that supports host countries in the implementation of the commitments made at the organization.

We could also consider other joint actions under Chapter VIII of the Charter — for example, in the area of training. Two years ago, we organized a course on conflict prevention for employees of the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and the OSCE. That format should be reactivated and serve as a model. We are prepared to devote ourselves to that task.

On elections, there is close cooperation between the United Nation and regional organizations and, as in the case of Georgia and Afghanistan, efforts are complementary. The OSCE will support the presidential elections to be held in Afghanistan in April 2014. Afghanistan is one of the OSCE's six partner cooperating countries in the Asian region. That will be the fifth time that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE will monitor elections in Afghanistan.

I should briefly like to expand upon an idea concerning the Asia-Pacific region. Next year, Switzerland will assume the chairmanship of the Partners for Cooperation in Asia forum, where we hope to discuss how to implement elements of an OSCE integrated and cooperative security model in East Asia. In the context of ongoing territorial disputes, rapidly increasing defence budgets and the increased risk of tensions and political polarization, East Asia could benefit from the experience of the OSCE on the establishment confidence-building measures and common standards through dialogue and transparency. The Asia-Pacific region is an engine for economic integration, and that may serve as a model when it comes to integration on the security front.

(*spoke in English*)

Since assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE at the beginning of 2014, my agenda has been dominated by the political crisis and recent escalation of violence in Ukraine. The outbreaks of violence in the context of the struggle about the future course of Ukraine and the high degree of instability the country has recently faced are a sobering reminder that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. Those developments have revealed the need to foster dialogue, re-establish trust and rebuild bridges, both within Ukraine and across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. It is my firm conviction that the OSCE has a major role to play on both counts.

During recent weeks, I have repeatedly called upon all sides to refrain from violence, resolve the crisis through dialogue and political means and respect human rights. In a series of meetings, I have discussed options for OSCE assistance with the then-Ukrainian Government as well as with members of the opposition.

The agreement reached on 21 February marked an important step towards ending the violence and paved the way for a political solution to the crisis.

I congratulate everyone involved who made that breakthrough possible, including the Polish, German and French Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy of the Russian Federation.

With the appointment of an interim President by the Parliament, Ukraine has now entered a new phase of transition. Formidable challenges lie ahead. We should unite in our efforts to support Ukraine in these difficult times. A stable, democratic and united Ukraine is in the interest of us all. I therefore propose establishing an international contact group on Ukraine. Ukraine should of course play a prominent role in the group, and the key international actors should be included. We are currently consulting on that idea with all actors involved. The main task of the proposed group would be to support Ukraine in this transition period. The contact group would serve as a platform for coordination and the sharing of information on international assistance and project activities in Ukraine. Through its impartiality and inclusivity, the OSCE has the necessary attributes to host and moderate the group. Ukraine and all international actors involved in the crisis are in fact participating States of the OSCE.

I have decided today to appoint Ambassador Tim Guldimann as my personal envoy on Ukraine. He will coordinate all ongoing and planned OSCE activities in Ukraine on behalf of the chairmanship. He will quickly start consultations with all sides and will cooperate closely with international partners.

A small OSCE core team has been sent to Ukraine to conduct a needs-assessment mission in the next few days. There is an urgent need to rebuild trust among all the parties involved. I encourage the new leaders of Ukraine to invite the ODIHR to send a human rights assessment mission to the country to establish the facts and circumstances of the incidents that took place in Ukraine. A human rights assessment mission would recommend measures to deal with serious violations of human rights allegedly committed during the crisis. Its findings would be presented in a report and would help advance national reconciliation in Ukraine.

Presidential elections will be a crucial moment in the current transition period. We expect the Ukrainian authorities to issue an early invitation for an ODIHR election observation mission. In view of the rapidly changing developments, we are also ready to review and further specify the activities of the OSCE project coordinator's office in Kiev.

We are currently witnessing a phase of de-escalation in Ukraine. It is essential to support a fair and inclusive process of transition that does not marginalize any part of Ukraine or any community. Ukraine deserves full international attention and support. I am convinced that the OSCE has the necessary tools to assist Ukraine in this difficult phase.

I will now turn to the priorities of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship. As the Council can see on the outline distributed this morning, we would like to contribute three main objectives, that is, fostering security and stability, improving people's lives and strengthening the OSCE capacity to act. Those three objectives embody three values — security, freedom and responsibility. For each of those main objectives, we have defined three to four priority areas. The Council will find information on the priority areas in the fact sheets provided. I am going to focus on some of them in this discussion with my following comments.

With regard to our first objective of fostering security and stability, I will limit myself to our geographical priorities, namely, the Western Balkans and the Southern Caucasus. I will also briefly mention the situation in Transdniestria.

In the Western Balkans, we want to make progress on regional cooperation and assist people to overcome the difficulties of the past — the reconciliation. A specific field of cooperation we wish to support concerns the issue of missing persons. We also intend to launch a process on migratory challenges, which should lead to the development of a regional strategy with the Regional Cooperation Council and in close consultation with the European Union.

The violent recent protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the resignation of several political leaders there have reminded us of the difficult political, economic and social context in that country and the prevailing risk of instability. Our mission on the ground is working closely with the European Union Force and the EU delegation to help improve the situation. The OSCE field presence is ready to offer its good offices and to facilitate dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is well positioned to do so, as it has managed to build up trust over the years both with cantonal and federal authorities and with representatives of civil society. My Special Representative has called on the authorities to engage in immediate dialogue with the citizens.

We will also contribute to normalizing the situation in northern Kosovo. The OSCE is not only organizing elections there, but it also aims to help create a democratic environment, restore confidence and encourage the political participation of minorities, again in close cooperation with the European Union.

As for our second geographical priority, Switzerland is looking for ways to build on its long-term involvement in the Southern Caucasus to help resolve the protracted conflicts in that region.

In Georgia, the OSCE is working closely with the United Nations and the EU in the context of the Geneva international discussions. The Swiss chairmanship will support that format as much as possible. We stand ready to revive discussions on an international presence in Georgia if that is in line with what Georgia wants and if all the parties involved demonstrate a degree of openness and flexibility on the issue. The Geneva discussions should move towards a real format for a settlement of the crisis.

Concerning the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, the Swiss chairmanship will maintain and support the established formats for conflict settlement, primarily the Minsk Group, co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France. The conflict deserves particular attention at this stage, as tensions have been rising lately with several violent incidents.

I also consider it important to draw the Council's attention to the difficult situation in Transdniestria and throughout Moldova. Alongside Russia and Ukraine, the OSCE has been mandated to act as a joint mediator in the Transdniestrian settlement process since 1993. There are indications that we may be entering a period of growing tensions in the conflict. I ask all the parties involved to act with caution and to refrain from making unilateral moves. More than ever, it is essential that the international community act in a coordinated manner.

Our second objective aims at improving people's lives. It is important for the OSCE to act not only in the interest of States but also of their citizens. All good politics is in the service of the people, by the people and for the people. That notion also lies behind our leitmotiv for our chairmanship in 2014, which is to create a security community for the benefit of everyone.

The Swiss chairmanship is convinced that reinforcing cooperation between regional and global organizations in promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law would significantly increase the impact of our work. Regional organizations need to play a leading role in implementing on the ground the commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations.

That is precisely why we have decided to focus our efforts on better implementation. International instruments for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as conventions and political commitments, can help improve people's lives only if their implementation is accepted and promoted by States at the national level. Organizations like the United Nations and the OSCE should do everything possible to support States in those efforts. Our focus is therefore on implementing the current commitments and not on developing new ones.

One particular aspect worth mentioning in that regard is our focus on the prevention of torture. A chairmanship event on the issue will bring together the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degradeing treatment or punishment, Mr. Juan E. Méndez, and experts from civil society and other multilateral and national agencies involved in torture prevention. There will also be a sequence of regional workshops with a view to increasing the involvement of civil society across the OSCE.

The Swiss chairmanship undertakes such initiatives with a view to encouraging the implementation of international commitments throughout the OSCE, beginning with those contained in the basic documents, namely, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol, which has not yet been ratified by all participating States, is a fundamental instrument in combating torture in all its forms.

Next is the topic of climate change and security. As a consequence of climate change, the number of natural disasters is increasing. Those disasters put the lives of many individuals at risk. That is why we have decided to make better prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters a priority of our chairmanship. Promoting know-how and fostering cooperation on such issues will help to improve the safety conditions for people who live in the OSCE area and beyond.

We are working on that in close cooperation with specialized United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. By doing

so, we also seek to contribute to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of March 2015, held in Sendai, Japan. Moreover, we are committed to firmly embedding the topic in the United Nations sustainable development goals, also for 2015.

Within the field of combating transnational threats, the fight against terrorism is a key concern. Kidnapping for ransom is a major source of funding for terrorist groups and organizations. They use those funds to increase their operational capacity and to carry out terrorist attacks. While they release upon payment, they are in fact setting up new victims.

We should all find a common response to such a challenge. That is why the Swiss chairmanship welcomes resolution 2133 (2014), of 27 January. The resolution invites Member States to continue holding expert discussions within the United Nations and other competent international or regional organizations. Switzerland supports that line very clearly and the OSCE will contribute to such discussions. Kidnapping for ransom will be the subject of several OSCE debates, notably within the Security Committee and at a conference on counter-terrorism in Switzerland at the end of April.

At that conference, we will also address the issue of foreign fighters. Over the past few years, an increasing number of citizens from OSCE participating States have joined armed groups outside the OSCE area and have participated in violent conflicts. Syria is just one particularly prominent example with many such foreign fighters. There are also other examples, such as the Horn of Africa.

Once those people return, they often stay in touch with extremists and terrorists, which means a heightened risk of terrorist attacks for their home countries. We therefore need to discuss how we can prevent such people from being recruited and departing to those conflict areas. But we also need to reflect on how to reintegrate returnees from such conflicts into our societies.

Concerning our third and last main objective of strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the OSCE's current reform process, called "Helsinki+40". The idea behind the process is to adapt the OSCE to the changing security needs, to address governance issues and to redefine the organization's approaches. The United Nations underwent a similar process in 2005, which resulted in the adoption of the World Summit Outcome document. As for the Helsinki+40 process, we are attempting to get a clear idea of where the OSCE is heading by 2015, 40 years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

Within the framework of that reform process, we seek to strengthen the OSCE's mediation capacities. During our Swiss chairmanship, we would like to put Switzerland's particular expertise in the field of mediation to the benefit of the organization. Our goal is to create a unit within the OSCE that is highly specialized in mediation and dialogue facilitation. It is absolutely essential for an organization that must be able to build bridges in all situations, particularly between the East and the West.

The initial results are encouraging. We would like to thank the United Nations, more specifically the Mediation Support Unit, for sharing its knowledge, for participating in an expert exchange and for co-organizing a training session.

In that context, I welcome the recent establishment of a United Nations-OSCE mediation partnership framework between our Conflict Prevention Centre and the United Nations Policy and Mediation Division. I hope that the joint framework will lead to numerous concrete activities in the field of mediation.

Lastly, we would also like to enhance exchanges with representatives of civil society during our chairmanship. In particular, we would like to give young people a voice. We are organizing a model OSCE, where youth ambassadors from all participating States will jointly develop a youth action plan similar to the Global Model United Nations and the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth. They have already started their work, in mid-January in Vienna. We strongly hope that their plan will inspire the OSCE Ministerial Council to adopt a youth action plan of its own and to provide young people with an institutionalized role within the OSCE.

I have highlighted numerous opportunities for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. We are eager to intensify the dialogue between our organizations. My hope is that we will succeed in translating many ideas for further cooperation into successful projects.

The President: I thank Mr. Burkhalter for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Chairperson-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for his briefing, in which he not only reviewed the activities of the organization that he is chairing but also notes the priorities of his country's chairmanship. We also thank the Lithuanian presidency, which again brings us together to discuss the ever-important topic of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

As we pointed out in the Council, for Chile collective action is essential in order to deal with long-standing and emerging threats. Such action is strengthened through the involvement of regional and subregional bodies. That is the sense in which my country understands Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which leads us to promote active multilateralism with an effective capacity to incorporate the contribution of regional and subregional organizations, always subject to coordination by the United Nations.

Chile wishes to commend the substantial contribution that the OSCE has made to maintaining international peace and security, putting into practice in Europe and beyond the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. In that context, we welcome the announcement of the Chairperson-in-office with regard to the holding of a conference in May to review the role of regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII, in line with the repositioning of the issue made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The OSCE originated from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, first held in Helsinki in 1975, when the possibility of a nuclear holocaust was not a theoretical exercise, as the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons warns. The organiziation made it possible to strengthen trust, an essential prerequisite in order to prevent conflict and address the security dilemma.

One of the lessons of the long crisis that led to the First World War, of which we will commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary this year, is the pernicious effect of arms races. In fact, one of the most emblematic results of the OSCE is the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is the kind of approach to that issue that best serves the interests of global security.

The OSCE has played an important role in bringing people together through dialogue, even in the difficult times during the Cold War. The expansion in the number of its States members and its partners in the Mediterranean and Asia shows the importance of the bridges of understanding that it has built and of its holistic view of security. That view includes not only the issue of defence, but also, and primarily, development, the environment and human welfare. The inclusiveness and diversity of its 57 States members is a reflection of that.

The three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and development — are indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Fragility in one of them inevitably affects the other two. That holistic view should guide us in this universal Organization and in regional and subregional organizations.

One point I wish to emphasize is the importance of conflict prevention and early-warning systems. That is a central issue, and one that complements the OSCE principles in the context of a comprehensive approach to security that goes beyond military and national perspectives to a multidimensional approach capable of meeting the current challenges of the international system.

I would also emphasize the importance of establishing cooperative ties in the field of prevention, mainly through education and the establishment or strengthening of networks.

The OSCE has effectively addressed a varied agenda that is, by and large, in line with the three pillars of the United Nations. In this second decade of the twenty-first century, it would be risky to restrict the security agenda to the military dimension of global politics. Security is achieved by addressing issues of development, the environment, an expanding and strengtheing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, including minority rights, the dialogue between civilizations and the fight against terrorism. The OSCE is making an important contribution in that regard, one that has made the human security paradigm an operational concept.

Once again, we reiterate to the Council the relevance, through the use of complementarity and of comparative advantages, of regional and subregional

organizations in the work of the United Nations on international peace and security.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, on the assumption of the position of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2014. We are very grateful for his personal briefing today on the priorities of the OSCE under his chairmanship.

The OSCE's approach to security is exemplary among the efforts to address today's growing security challenges, which are becoming more complex and multifaceted. The Republic of Korea appreciates and supports the OSCE's unique role in that regard. In particular, we take note of the fact that the OSCE is taking meaningful steps to deal with transnational and emerging threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and challenges to cybersecurity.

Having hosted the Seoul Conference on Cyberspace in October 2013, the Republic of Korea pays special attention to the OSCE's adoption of the initial set of confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technology. We believe that kind of initiative will provide timely momentum to regional cooperation to counter new forms of threats.

The Republic of Korea also welcomes the "Helsinki+40" process, which aims at rebuilding confidence measures in terms of responding to regional challenges, which is very much in line with the work of the Council. In that vein, we support the OSCE's commitment to advancing reconciliation in the Western Balkans, resolving the protracted conflict in the Southern Caucasus and Transnistria, and dealing with the emerging crisis in Ukraine, as explained by the Chairperson-in-Office.

Another area we would like to mention is the OSCE's continued effort to promote the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Republic of Korea, as the current Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), highly values the OSCE's efforts to enhance cooperation with the Security Council in that area.

Central Asia and Afghanistan are another region of shared concern between the United Nations and the OSCE. It is commendable that the OSCE has contributed to the promotion of security in that region, as shown by the decision to send an elections support team to Afghanistan for the presidential and provincial council elections coming up in April. We expect the OSCE to continue to support Afghanistan and Central Asia with its vast experience in confidence-building, the prevention of conflict and rehabilitation after conflict.

Overall, we would like to reaffirm our support for the enhanced role of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. As a strong partner of the United Nations in promoting international peace and security, we look forward to closer cooperation between the OSCE and the Council.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to wish a warm welcome to the Security Council to His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. I thank him for his very clear briefing on his priorities as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2014.

I will begin my remarks with a subject that the Chairperson-in-Office mentioned and that concerns us all, namely, Ukraine. We were shocked last week by the escalation of violence in several Ukrainian cities, which caused dozens of deaths and numerous injuries. In Ukraine, as in other participating States, it is essential that the commitments under the OSCE framework be fully respected and implemented. Those responsible for violence must be held accountable for their actions.

We welcome the efforts made by the international community to stop the violence and find a peaceful and negotiated end to the crisis. We call on all political forces to show restraint and pursue dialogue. The unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be preserved. A lasting political solution to the crisis requires the formation of a new inclusive Government, constitutional reform and the holding of democratic, free and impartial elections.

The OSCE's contribution will be important in supporting that political solution. The Chairperson-in-Office has given us a glimpse of the shape that that contribution could take, in close cooperation with the European Union, the Council of Europe and other partners. We believe that in Ukraine, the OSCE will once again be able to play its role as a bridge between

the East and the West in order to promote peace, democracy and stability.

As a member of the OSCE, Luxembourg fully supports the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship. We appreciate the close coordination of its priorities with those of Serbia, which will assume the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, and its strengthening of the continuity of its activities, and thereby the effectiveness of the organization.

We also welcome the close cooperation that has been consolidated between successive chairmanships since the Dublin Ministerial Council of 2012 with a view to deepening the approach taken to envisioning a Euro-Atlantic-Eurasian security community that is free, democratic, united and indivisible. The recent appointment of eight coordinators to conduct discussions is a further step towards advancing the "Helsinki+40" process.

We welcome the intention of the Swiss chairmanship to enhance cooperation between the OSCE and its partners on the ground. The OSCE plays an essential role in mediation and in dealing with and resolving conflicts, working in harmony with the United Nations and other regional organizations. That is the case in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, through the Minsk Group and the process of Geneva talks. That is also the case in Moldova with regard to the Transnistrian conflict. In Kosovo, the OSCE has provided indispensable support in facilitating elections in the four northern municipalities, pursuant to the First Agreement on Principles Governing Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina. In that regard, we welcome the successful holding yesterday of the initial elections towards the selection of the mayor of Mitrovica-North.

The Swiss chairmanship has rightly focused its chairmanship under the leitmotif of creating a security community for the benefit of everyone. Luxembourg shares the importance that gives to the human dimension of security. The OSCE was founded on the idea that lasting security is possible only if human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected. In that context, I would like to highlight the continuous support my country provides to the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Their independence and impartiality are at the heart of the organization.

During our chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation in the past four months of 2013, Luxembourg worked to help the OSCE better respond to the challenges posed by small arms and weapons, and stocks of ammunition. We also encouraged cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in Afghanistan, in the light of the major challenges that country must face in 2014.

I wish to assure the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and his team that Luxembourg will spare no effort to support their efforts. In order to adhere to the goal of making this briefing more interactive, I will conclude my remarks by asking a question to the Chairperson-in-Office. He referred to the phenomenon of foreign fighters, which is of particular concern in Syria at present. In resolution 2139 (2014), which was just adopted the day before yesterday, the Security Council demanded that all foreign fighters immediately withdraw from Syria. In his veiw, what contribution can the OSCE make to fighting against the phenomenon of foreign fighters in general?

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. It is my pleasure to warmly welcome the President of Switzerland, Mr. Didier Burkhalter. Allow me to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014. We have full confidence in his abilities to strengthen the capacities of the organization in addressing security issues in a global framework of cooperation.

The OSCE, like its predecessor the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has played an important and effective role in tackling the issues that represent a threat to regional stability in Europe. That helps strengthen security and stability throughout the world. There is no doubt that, without its contribution, Europe and the world would be less stable and less safe than they are today. Jordan therefore greatly appreciates the OSCE's efforts and its cooperation with the United Nations with a view to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations as well as the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. That will inevitably help boost collective security, in particular in the spheres of preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures,

curbing the arms race, tackling transnational threats and in mediation, reconciliation and negotiation.

In that regard, the OSCE, as part of its three dimensions in the field of security, has optimal tools for responding to international challenges and building stability and peace. Security and peace cannot be achieved by tackling international challenges via military means alone; rather, a comprehensive approach is required, incorporating economic, social and human elements. That is at the heart of the Helsinki process and of United Nations efforts to resolve various conflicts.

Jordan, which has been a Mediterranean partner of the OSCE since 1998, attaches great importance to the role of the partnership between the OSCE and a number of Mediterranean countries with a view to strengthening the security regime in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It positively supports the pursuit of partnership in various spheres through this forum for dialogue and exchanging ideas and knowledge on regional security. Recent events in the Mediterranean region have highlighted the need to bolster and advance that cooperation in a tangible way, based on the concept of the complementarity of security in the Mediterranean and Europe.

With regard to the ongoing cooperation between the OSCE and the Afghan Government in tackling the challenges to peace and security there, we welcome the efforts deployed to complement those of the international community to strengthen democracy and stability, including through technical assistance in the organization of the upcoming local and presidential elections.

We attach particular importance to the various OSCE initiatives seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Ukraine and to its efforts towards settling the crises in the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus as well as discussions on international cooperation. The OSCE has proved its ability to play a leading role in coordination with the United Nations and regional organizations, including the European Union, in resolving conflicts and in strengthening peace in the Balkans. In that respect, we welcome the efforts the OSCE has made in Kosovo in strengthening democratic institutions and in enhancing human rights and the rule of law. We commend OSCE efforts in supporting local elections in northern Kosovo. The organization's work in Kosovo, alongside to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, as well as its role as coordinator with United Nations agencies and regional offices contributes greatly to developing cooperation with the United Nations on the ground.

There is no doubt that addressing international threats and challenges is part and parcel of the OSCE's main task, which is why it is necessary to cooperate in finding solutions with the organization to address repercussions from the dangers of climate change and natural disasters, which, along with cybercrime and the threat of weapons of mass destruction, constitute new security threats. Along with international terrorism, which remains a genuine threat in all countries of the world, those challenges require the convergence of the international community's efforts to confront the threats at different levels, including the establishment of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the OSCE. We commend the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2133 (2014), which calls for outlawing the paying of ransom or political concessions for the release of hostages. We call upon all States to implement the resolution and to boost cooperation to put an end to that phenomenon.

In his briefing, the Chairperson-in-Office highlighted the key elements of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE, including respect for human rights in combating torture, which is a crime in contravention of the principles of international law. It is necessary for the international community to work to combat such actions, because human life and human dignity are at the foundation of human rights.

In conclusion, we express our support for the pursuit and intensification of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE by coordinating international efforts and in drawing up a common strategic vision to confront common security challenges at all levels.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to very warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to thank him for his briefing on the priorities of his chairmanship and, above all, for the strong commitment that he has expressed to meet the challenges facing his organization.

As Mr. Burkhalter has pointed out, the OSCE is the largest regional security organization in the world, with 57 States members in Europe, North America and Asia. The OSCE has been recognized since 1992 as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the

United Nations. Beyond the regions it covers, the OSCE can play an important role in the settlement of conflicts that the international community faces. The priorities of the Swiss chairmanship for 2014 in the three areas covered by the organization — politico-military, economic-environmental and human — will undoubtedly contribute to improving the situation in member States confronting the challenges of insecurity and violations of human rights, whether linked to the environment or to transnational crime. The approach chosen by Chairperson-in-Office Burkhalter is intended to strengthen initiatives aimed at dialogue, transparency and prevention, whether in the area of conflict or in the environmental sphere. He would also like to make the most of mediation and solidarity, which are appropriate tools to strengthen the organization's efforts. Strengthening institutions by reforming the OSCE is also among his priorities, because he must provide the organization with an effective means to face the challenges of the day.

Opening up the OSCE to new members and civil society should contribute to bringing them together and providing a fresh impetus to the organization. Unfortunately, the OSCE will face no shortage of difficult challenges when it comes to peace, given the conflicts that have taken place recently in certain countries and regions, which is the case in Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Western Balkans, Kosovo, Nagorno Karabakh and the Southern Caucuses. The recent events that we have seen in Ukraine in recent days will be a fresh challenge to overcome.

Issues related to respect for human rights are also part of the many problems to be addressed, as is the fight against the growth of transnational crime. In that context, strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and the OSCE is of major importance. The OSCE deserves special attention from the Security Council, commensurate with the scale of the difficulties it faces. That is why we support the comments made by the Chairperson-in-Office, and we call upon the Security Council to unreservedly strengthen its cooperation with the OSCE and, in particular, with its Chairperson-in-Office in order to successfully accomplish the priorities set for the chairmanship in 2014.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Madam President, for arranging for this opportunity to have an exchange. I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs. I commend him on his assumption of the chairmanship-in-offfice of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I also thank him for his briefing on the Swiss priorities during his chairmanship and on the possibilities for cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Argentina appreciates the cooperation that regional and subregional organizations make to the maintenance of international peace and security. Debates such as the one we are having today enable us to reflect on the various dimensions of the links between regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. That is a subject to which my country attaches great importance, and we welcome the trend that we have seen in the Council to maintain dialogues of this kind. We hope this will be built upon further as a good practice and will be extended to other regional and subregional organizations on the same footing with equal treatment.

Regional and subregional organizations are key to strengthening the multilateral system. They give greater legitimacy to, and render more effective the actions of, the international community in addressing challenges to peace and in promoting dialogue and cooperation. Their contribution complements the work of the United Nations and builds on their knowledge of their own regions, as well with regard to the causes of the conflicts. Such irreplaceable comparative advantages are of great value to efforts for conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In that context, I reiterate my country's appreciation for the important work carried out by the OSCE in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict situations.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, characterized by its scope both in geographical terms and in content, has made it possible to achieve a more coordinated approach among various international actors. It is fitting to underscore, among other examples, OSCE cooperation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which has contributed to the work undertaken towards normalizing relations and advancing stability in the region.

We also believe it to be important to again underscore the close cooperation between the OSCE

and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia. Such cooperation certainly indicates the important contribution of the Regional Centre in dealing with both national issues that affect regional stability and the cross-border impact of the threat of terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as environmental degradation and water-resource management.

With regard to Switzerland's priorities during its chairmanship, we welcome its close alignment with Serbia, which will succeed it in the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, in the context of a two-year work plan in order to ensure the continuity of activities and to increase the organization's effectiveness.

We welcome the emphasis on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, the promotion of dialogue among the Kosovo communities and support for OSCE activities and institutions on the ground. We also welcome the dialogue and rapprochement in the Southern Caucasus through participation in the Geneva talks on regional stability with a view to promoting security and stability. We are also pleased by Switzerland's readiness to support the role of the OSCE as a platform for the exchange of ideas and conventional arms control talks in Europe.

For Argentina, based on our institutional definition of human rights as a State policy and our social culture founded on the principles, norms and practices of equality, non-discrimination, individual freedom and social justice, it is particularly appreciated that the implementation of obligations of a human dimension focused in areas such as the fight against torture, respect for human rights and the rule of law in combating terrorism, the protection of human rights defenders, the promotion of democratic elections and respect for the rights of those belonging to the various different minorities are at the heart of the Swiss chairmanship. For its part, bearing in mind the importance of cooperation in the fight against transnational threats, such as terrorism, we welcome the holding of a conference to address the response to such threats, while at the same time ensuring respect for human rights.

With regard to a topic on the Security Council agenda, as is the case with Afghanistan, we welcome the OSCE decision to send, at the request of the Government of Afghanistan, a support team for the presidential and provincial council elections that will take place in April. That decision is an important contribution to the international community's efforts to promote democracy and greater stability in the country in the context of its transition and the withdrawal of the international security forces during this year. It is proof of the positive synergies that are possible between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Finally, we appreciate the high-level dialogue proposed by Switzerland in order to advance the reform process of the OSCE in line with the mandate entrusted by the OSCE Ministerial Council to the chairmanship at the end of 2012 with a view to improving the organization's ability to act. We agree with and support the vision and the priorities set by Switzerland for the work of the OSCE this year. We highlight the emphasis on the participation of young people. We share and appreciate Switzerland's commitment towards gender equality in all decision-making processes related to inclusive and fair democracies.

We therefore trust that the Security Council and the entire United Nations system will strengthen cooperation efforts with the OSCE during the current chairmanship and with other regional and subregional organizations so as to find together the best answers to the challenges facing us in order to ensure human rights, democracy, peace and security.

I could not conclude without expressing Argentina's conviction and support because we believe that, in the situation facing Ukraine today, only dialogue, not violence, between the people and the various political and social movements in Ukraine will lead to a peaceful and democratic settlement of their differences.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and thank him for his comprehensive briefing. I also congratulate his country on its assumption of the chairmanship of the OSCE for 2014.

Almost 40 years since its establishment, the role of the OSCE, through its early-warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation systems, has proved that the organization is one of the important partners of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We also believe that such kinds of interactions with regional and subregional organizations are a good

opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the mandates of those organizations.

We note the official launch of the "Helsinki+40" project by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in January. We look forward to the completion of the OSCE strategic document in 2015, and we hope that the conclusion of that exercise will help the organization to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in a more efficient manner.

In the meantime, I would also like to encourage the OSCE to extend its cooperation to other regional organizations, mainly in the area of experience-sharing, most especially with the African Union, an organization that is evolving into a viable and irreplaceable partner for the maintenance of peace and security on the African continent.

Allow me also to express our appreciation for the important role that the OSCE is currently playing in facilitating various processes aimed at settling the crises and conflicts in its region, especially the continued efforts of the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to mediate on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Rwanda supports the position contained in the joint statement of the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chair countries, issued on 18 June 2013, which reiterates that only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability and reconciliation, opening opportunities for regional development and cooperation.

Another important contribution of the OSCE that we value is its assistance in the destruction of surplus weapons left by the Cold War, especially in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as its support for arms control through its Forum for Security Cooperation. It is also very encouraging that the modernization of the Vienna Document and exchange of ideas on conventional arms control are among the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship.

In the Balkans, we commend the active contribution of the OSCE in the recent municipal elections in Kosovo, its contribution to promoting the rule of law and its continued support of the Roma and Sinti minorities.

With respect to the OSCE's efforts in combating transnational threats, I welcome the OSCE's intention to organize a conference in April on foreign fighters in other countries. I look forward to the positive outcome of the conference.

On Ukraine, we are very alarmed by the ongoing situation in that OSCE member State. The situation has proved that it has the potential to take a dangerous twist, unfortunately leading to dozens of deaths and injuries and the destruction of property. We welcome the efforts of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, including by proposing the establishment of an international contact group on Ukraine and the appointment of a special envoy to that country.

We also commend Poland, Germany and France for brokering, on 21 February, the agreement on the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine between the Government and the opposition. We took note of the turn of events that followed the signing of that deal, namely, the moves by the Supreme Rada to release former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko from a prison hospital and to divest President Viktor Yanukovych. Nonetheless, we hope that all parties will implement the agreement in good faith, particularly by refraining from all kinds of violence and by putting in place a Government of national unity that will carry out the necessary constitutional and legal reforms, leading to presidential elections scheduled before the end of this year. We call on all international actors to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine and ensure that the process is Ukrainian-led and Ukrainian-owned.

Finally, I would like to express my country's support for the vision and priorities of the Swiss Chairperson of the OSCE's work this year. We look forward to continued good cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): We are pleased to welcome Mr. Didier Burkhalter to the Council and to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him in particular for his very informative briefing on the OSCE's plans and priorities for 2014 and would like to wish him a very successful tenure.

The OSCE remains a key component of European security. Its importance for building strong and genuinely cooperative relationships among its 50-some States members was quite evident from the briefing we just heard. We are pleased that the OSCE is not only making noteworthy progress as a regional organization, but also enhancing cooperation with the United

Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, we commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We appreciate the important role the OSCE is currently playing in facilitating various processes aimed at settling crises and conflicts in its region. We also welcome the high priority that the Chairperson-in-Office has placed on the agreement reached between the parties towards the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. We believe that the implementation process will be strengthened by the support and expertise of the OSCE, and we urge that mediation, dialogue and cooperation be accorded priority in the search for an enduring solution.

We also welcome the OSCE's efforts in assisting Azerbaijan and Armenia in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and we welcome the European Union-led dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The OSCE's role in support of the dialogue is very important.

The emphasis placed on human rights, women's and civil society issues, freedom of the press and the promotion of democracy on the agenda of the OSCE deserves our encouragement and, indeed, our broad support. Challenges encountered on those cross-cutting issues underscore the need for a further increase in international corporation in order to jointly address their root causes.

Going forward, pressing challenges such as the ongoing tensions in South Ossetia, the pursuit of freedom of the press, the safety of journalists and the settlement of territorial disputes in the Southern Caucasus region present a unique opportunity to promote change in the region. We share Mr. Burkhalter's commitment to effectively cope with transnational threats to international peace and security such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and terrorism. Since transnational crimes are not limited by territorial boundaries, combating them requires complete cooperation. For that reason, we urge the OSCE to continue to create opportunities for corporation and information exchanges with regional security agencies, including the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

Finally, we believe that the vision that the Chairperson-in-Office has outlined ensures a very promising future for the OSCE. It is a vision that will promote regional stability and international peace and security. Such an agenda advances the work of the Security Council, and is thus deserving of our support and endorsement. But the OSCE must maintain its role in the region. It must retain its fundamental character as the most inclusive Atlantic forum for consultation and joint action.

Ms. King (Australia): I would also like to thank His Excellency President Didier Burkhalter and welcome him to the Council as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations clearly strengthens the United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, prevent conflict and restore stability in post-conflict situations. The OSCE provides welcome expertise in those areas, and close cooperation with it will assist the Council as it endeavours to fulfil its mandate.

As an Asian Partner for Cooperation with the OSCE since 2009, Australia strongly supports the OSCE's work. We welcome the 2014 OSCE priorities for fostering security and stability, improving people's lives and enhancing its own capacity to act.

With regard to territorial disputes, we welcome the OSCE's efforts to reduce tensions and engage parties in dialogue. Those efforts are crucial in helping to resolve territorial disputes such as those concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We welcome recent developments in Ukraine, which has seen moves towards peaceful dialogue — developments that were backed by calls from the OSCE for restraint from violence, resolution through dialogue and political means and respect for international humanitarian norms. Australia of course shares those views. It will be important in coming months for the OSCE to assist in ensuring that Ukraine remains able to transition to a new Government and a new Constitution and to fulfil the aspirations of the Ukrainian people. In that regard, Australia welcomes the OSCE's willingness to remain engaged and President Burkhalter's offer that the OSCE support Ukraine as an impartial witness to the implementation of agreed steps.

We commend the OSCE's recent appointment of a special representative for the Western Balkans, a region

where the OSCE has worked constructively to facilitate the recent peaceful and fair conduct of the mayoral and municipal elections in northern Kosovo, which was a key milestone in ensuring full implementation of the 19 AprilAagreement. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the special representative's efforts will be particularly important in improving the security environment in the country.

We also welcome the OSCE's continued constructive contribution to supporting Afghanistan's security and stability with an OSCE election and support team to assist with the presidential and provincial elections in April.

We are pleased the OSCE is placing priority on addressing transnational threats. We strongly support the OSCE's ongoing efforts to counter terrorism by tackling a number of emerging aspects of the terrorism threat. First, we welcome President Burkhalter's focus on kidnapping for ransom. In adopting resolution 2133 (2014) a few weeks ago, the Council sent a united message about the increase in terror- financing through kidnapping for ransom and about the role that regional organizations must play in addressing that threat. We agree with President Burkhalter that we should find a common response to that challenge, and we encourage the OSCE to use the strong framework provided by resolution 2133 (2014) to continue to strengthen awareness, capacity and cooperation among members so as to prevent the payment of ransoms to terrorists and draw on the support of the Security Council counter-terrorism entities and their expert bodies, as well as of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and its Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices.

Secondly, we support the OSCE's work on countering violent extremism and radicalization. The changing nature of the terrorism threat and the fact that it is more diffuse, with groups intent on taking advantage of social, economic and governance vulnerabilities, have driven the Security Council, and United Nations States Members more broadly, to recognize that countering violent extremist strategies is essential for preventing the spread of terrorism. The OSCE is clearly doing valuable work on that issue, in particular with its forthcoming resource on community policing. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee would benefit from the OSCE's sharing its work and experience in that area to reinforce the way in which the Council engages with the United Nations membership on its counter-terrorism obligations.

Thirdly, we note the OSCE's intention to address the issue of the growing trend of citizens travelling offshore to engage in or support terrorist activities or conflict. Like other members of the international community, Australia is very concerned about that, and it is important for the international community to work together in order to address the issue, including by enforcing Security Council travel bans and through effective measures to counter violent extremism.

Australia also values the important work being done by the OSCE in countering trafficking in persons, and we are pleased to have supported an OSCE programme promoting human rights protection for trafficked persons and vulnerable groups in Central Asia.

We also welcome the OSCE's intention to refocus its agenda to address the use of torture. Australia deplores the use of torture by any country and in any circumstances. We agree with President Burkhalter that regional organizations need to work to implement on-the-ground commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations, specifically in this case by ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The international community needs to work collaboratively to eliminate the use of torture. Australia looks forward to working with the OSCE to achieve that.

President Burkhalter has given the Council a clear sense of where the OSCE and the United Nations may serve to strengthen each other's efforts. The Council should continue to work closely with the OSCE. We wish President Burkhalter every success in leading the OSCE in its important work this year.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the presence of Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, and I congratulate his country on its accession to the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014. The United Nations and the OSCE share common objectives, one at the global level and the other at the regional level, namely, to strengthen the links and dialogue among States to better ensure their security.

In that regard, I welcome the proposed mediation in Ukraine put forward by the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE. All efforts must be made to end the crisis peacefully while respecting the wishes of the Ukrainian people and the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Following the violence that has

caused such grief in Ukraine in recent days, we must support the transformations under way in that country. Institutions are being established. A new Government will soon have to organize elections as soon as possible. France and the European Union will continue their efforts to favour democratic reform and modernization in Ukraine, with full respect for its unity, integrity and independence.

The OSCE will have a major role to play. As it unites all of the States concerned by the crisis, it finds itself in a unique position to overcome the geopolitical concerns of the various parties. An artificial fault line must not again be created in Europe, as Ukraine would suffer from that by losing its role as a bridge at the heart of our continent.

I will dwell on three points regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. From Central Asia and Georgia to Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE and the United Nations have shown their capacity to work hand-in-hand. That complementarity draws on the commitment of the OSCE on the ground. Through its missions, the OSCE is present in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans, often side-by-side with the United Nations. In the Caucasus, the OSCE is working to promote dialogue and rebuild trust — indeed, the Swiss chairmanship has made that one of its priorities.

As co-chair of the Minsk Group with the United States and the Russian Federation, France has worked to help Armenia and Azerbaijan find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. The resumption of high-level talks between the two Presidents gives us hope for progress in the peace process.

On Georgia, France supports the Geneva talks and the role played by the OSCE together with the European Union and the United Nations, and reaffirms its support for the territorial integrity of the country. We welcome the readiness of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE to reopen discussions on the presence of the OSCE in Georgia on the condition that the parties show flexibility and creativity.

In Central Asia, the OSCE contributes to regional stability. Its cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in combatting crosscutting threats is an example of successful cooperation with the United Nations. The OSCE will also have a role to play in observing the presidential elections in Afghanistan scheduled for the spring.

In the Balkans, the OSCE's collaboration with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo allowed the Kosovo electorate to participate in peaceful municipal elections in November 2013. The OSCE carried out that task with professionalism, thanks again to its substantial presence on the ground. It will once again be called upon in 2014 to facilitate the holding of a number of elections to be held in Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, the in-depth analysis undertaken within the OSCE contributes to broader progress on security. We welcome the willingness of the Swiss chairmanship to update the 2011 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. Likewise, we support the intention to encourage the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which is important for ensuring democratic oversight of security and the armed forces. Moreover, we welcome the Swiss intention to organize a number of workshops focused on transnational threats and aimed at promoting cooperation between police forces.

Finally, we endorse the priority given to promoting the upholding of commitments undertaken by participating States on human rights over the past 40 years. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the freedom of expression and media freedom.

It is a fact that the OSCE covers a vast area, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, that shares common values — an expanse marked by the belief that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions goes hand-in-hand with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Those values are also at the heart of the work of the United Nations. France therefore supports the dialogue launched at the Dublin Ministerial Council on the political future of the OSCE in the context of the "Helsinki+40" process. Those reforms will allow the OSCE to continue to be a modern and effective partner for the United Nations.

France endorses the desire of the Chairperson-in-Office to strengthen the mediation capacities of the OSCE, which is a measure of its continuing commitment to work with the United Nations in seeking lasting solutions to conflicts.

I conclude by once again wishing Switzerland — and its successor, Serbia, with whom it has defined the OSCE's priorities — the greatest of success during its term in office and by assuring it of France's support.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming the President of the Swiss Confederation, His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, to the Council today, and to thank him for setting out his priorities as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The United Kingdom strongly supports the OSCE. As a major regional security organization in the European space, it is well-placed to complement many areas of the work of the United Nations. The strength of the OSCE's institutions means that, when the will of all its participating States is present, the OSCE can significantly contribute to the promotion of security, stability, democracy and the rule of law across its region.

I would like to express the United Kingdom's strong support for Swiss priorities in the OSCE. As Chair of the Security Committee, the United Kingdom is working closely with the OSCE chairmanship to develop many of those priorities. We welcome the focus on counter-terrorism, notably on disrupting terrorist financing, by working in support of resolution 2133 (2014) to end revenue streams obtained by kidnap for ransom. We also welcome the OSCE's continuing work in a number of other areas, not least those related to resolution 1540 (2004), on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and subsequent resolutions to encourage regional bodies to assist in implementation; resolution 2117 (2013), on small arms and light weapons, including in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty; and resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. With regard to the latter, I would like to stress the inclusion of preventing sexual violence in conflict.

We also welcome the Swiss focus this year on the Western Balkans, where the OSCE has a long-standing presence. It can add value there to the actions of the European Union and other international organizationsm — for example, through election facilitation, through intercommunity relations, on media freedom and on the rule of law. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have been deeply concerned by the violence that has accompanied recent protests. Those protests must be a wake-up call for all of us. There needs to be a major international effort to help strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions and its territorial integrity. The OSCE will undoubtedly have a role in that effort.

An important focus for the international community, including the OSCE, is the current situation in Ukraine, which has seen serious violence and dramatic developments in recent days. That violence has led to the deaths of more than 80 people and left more than 600 injured. Such horrific scenes have no place in twenty-first century Europe. Our condolences go out to the families of all those who lost their lives, and our sympathies to go those injured.

Events have been moving swiftly in Ukraine, as Yanukovych has left Kiev. In his absence, the Ukrainian Parliament has voted in a series of decrees by large majorities, the details of which were circulated to Council members this morning in a letter from the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations. They include the formation of a unity Government. That Government must now move rapidly to build a stable, inclusive and fair political system and work to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Ukraine. They must create the conditions that will allow for free and fair elections in May and ensure accountability for the serious human rights violations and acts of violence that we have witnessed during the past three months. We hope the Government will call on the undoubted expertise of the OSCE. Free and fair elections are crucial for rebuilding the confidence of Ukrainians and avoiding future tension.

We would like to pay tribute to the work of the OSCE in Ukraine. Last December's OSCE Ministerial Council took place in Kiev against a backdrop of large-scale public protests. Since then, the OSCE has played a positive role in efforts to support a peaceful solution through the good offices of the OSCE for mediation. We welcome the announcement that Mr. Burkhalter has appointed the respected Swiss diplomat Tim Guldimann as his personal envoy to Ukraine.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting a stable, united and economically prosperous Ukraine. The role of the international community must be to allow ordinary Ukrainians to decide their future. That is not a zero-sum game. All in the international community want a stable and prosperous Ukraine. We all now need to work together help restore stability and protect Ukraine's economy.

I again thank Mr. Burkhalter for his presentation today. The United Kingdom will continue working closely with him and his team in Vienna to ensure that our shared vision for the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and cooperation across an often divided region can be advanced during 2014.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I, too, would like to welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, President Didier Burkhalter, to the Security Council and to thank him for today's briefing on OSCE activities under Swiss leadership.

We commend the Chairperson-in-Office for his efforts to promote security and stability, strengthen the OSCE's capacity to combat transnational threats, address protracted conflicts, ensure security after natural disasters and advance human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also commend Chairperson-in-Office Burkhalter's continued engagement on Ukraine and note that he has repeatedly confirmed the OSCE's readiness to assist Ukraine in securing a peaceful way forward.

The United States is closely monitoring developments in Ukraine. We have consistently advocated a de-escalation of violence, constitutional change, a coalition Government and early elections. The unshakable principle guiding events must be that the people of Ukraine determine their own future. We welcome constructive work in the Supreme Rada and continue to urge the prompt formation of a broad, technocratic Government of national unity. Going forward, we will work with other States in appropriate European and international organizations to support a strong, prosperous, united and democratic Ukraine. We urge Ukrainian authorities to seize the opportunities for OSCE assistance, including offers from the Chairperson-in-Office, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media for mediation, fact-finding missions, election monitoring, legislative review or other assistance. Welcoming those measures without delay would provide transparency to citizens in desperate need of answers and accountability.

The United Nations-OSCE agenda is ambitious and robust, with the two organizations working together on a wide range of issues, from counter-terrorism and counter-trafficking to early warning and conflict settlement to democratization and good governance. The memorandum of understanding between the OSCE and the United Nations on joint projects to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime-OSCE joint action plan to address transnational threats represent two concrete examples of the organizations' work together to tackle key issues of global importance. We look forward to the full implementation of those agreements.

The United States views the OSCE as a strong partner in international counter-terrorism efforts. The organization has strengthened counter-terrorism capacities by conducting training programmes that promote norms and standards of responsible State behaviour, by sharing and helping to implement best practices and by providing assistance to participating States as they develop human-rights-compliant counter-terrorism policies. The OSCE has led efforts to examine the role of women's empowerment in countering violent extremism through a series of expert round tables, most recently at the International Symposium on Terrorism and Transnational Crime held in Turkey in December. We welcome the OSCE's deepened collaboration with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, established by the United States and other concerned Governments, with a core mission to promote the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy.

Good relations between neighbours is a vital indication that our shared objective of cooperative, indivisible security is being realized. We therefore encourage the Chairperson-in-Office's Special Representative for the Western Balkans, Ambassador Stoudmann, to be ambitious in his efforts to promote reconciliation and cooperation in the region. We have already seen encouraging progress in Kosovo, where the OSCE has been instrumental in helping to implement the historic 19 April Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, in particular through the facilitation of local elections in northern Kosovo.

We welcome the OSCE's long-standing commitment and leadership in trying to find solutions to Europe's protracted conflicts. The international community should not allow the status quo in Georgia or in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict or in the Transdniestrian conflict to persist. The two special representatives for the Southern Caucuses and Moldova, respectively, whom the Chairperson-in-Office jointly appointed with Serbia, should assist the parties in those conflicts to identify and implement steps that will promote peaceful settlements.

Outside its region, the OSCE provides expertise that benefits Asian and Mediterranean partner countries. The OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, for example, provides specialized training for border security agencies from across Central Asia, the wider OSCE region and Afghanistan.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE's special relationship with Afghanistan, an OSCE Partner for Cooperation, and values the OSCE's continued active engagement during this crucial year of transition. The organization's work in Afghanistan complements the United Nations own efforts, including its support for the country's upcoming elections. Credible, transparent and inclusive elections are critical to Afghanistan's stability and democratic development. For that reason, the United States has contributed approximately $2 million to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for the deployment of an election support team in Afghanistan. We would welcome additional contributions to the team from OSCE participating and partner States.

In the area of human rights, we share the Chairperson-in-Office's focus on implementing the OSCE's existing commitments in the human dimension. The OSCE is a premier organization in the protection of human rights, the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, the advancement of gender equality and support for citizens' rights to exercise their fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, expression and belief. We welcome the Chairperson-in-Office's goals to work closely with civil society counterparts and to strengthen OSCE efforts to ensure that participating States uphold their human dimension commitments.

The United States is an active member of the OSCE, and we remain fully committed to its important work. The continued and renewed dialogue and collective efforts of the OSCE and its participating States remain as important as ever, and we welcome such goals and actions in coordination with the United Nations.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Lithuania's initiative in organizing this briefing on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and would like to thank Mr. Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for attending today's meeting. We have listened very carefully to his briefing.

As an important regional organization, the OSCE has over the years made a positive contribution to efforts to conduct preventive diplomacy, enhance security and mutual trust, mediate regional disputes and combat terrorism and crime. China appreciates those efforts, and we listened carefully to the three priorities presented by Mr. Burkhalter for the Swiss chairmanship. We encourage the OSCE to continue to fully exploit its advantages, to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as mediation and good offices, and to play a positive and constructive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. China supports the efforts of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, to enhance its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Such cooperation should strive to maintain strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations, in particular the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. The United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should capitalize on their respective advantages and enhance their complementarity and coordination.

China supports cooperation between the United Nations, the Security Council and the OSCE in maintaining regional peace and stability. We hope that the channels of cooperation will be expanded and approaches diversified, so as to achieve pragmatic and effective cooperation, thereby jointly contributing to international and regional peace, stability and development.

China has followed the political situation in Ukraine very closely. We hope that all parties will continue to settle their disputes and differences peacefully and lawfully through political consultation and that political stability is achieved and order restored as soon as possible. China hopes that the international community will continue to make positive efforts and play a constructive role in achieving stability in the situation in Ukraine. We respect the choice made by the Ukrainian people on the basis of national conditions. We are ready to continue to develop a strategic partnership with Ukraine on the basis of peace and mutual benefit.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the President of Switzerland to the Security Council in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him for his comprehensive briefing.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported developing and improving cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional mechanisms on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE should be rest on that same foundation.

Cooperation between the two organizations is regular and multilateral in nature. It covers all aspects of security, as well as cross-dimensional issues. The OSCE complements the work of the United Nations and facilitates the implementation of mechanisms agreed at the global level in its area of regional responsibility and as part of its mandate.

Russia intends to cooperate constructively with the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office, who, we trust, will implement a balanced course in the interests of all Member States. In general, we support the Chairperson-in-Office's three priorities for 2014, namely, strengthening security and stability, improving people's lives and reinforcing the capacities of the OSCE. The programme of work in those three OSCE dimensions appears to be balanced, covering the military, political, economic, environmental and humanitarian spheres.

We note the willingness of the Chairperson-in-Office to take into account Russian priorities and approaches, including combating transnational threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking, protecting the rights of national minorities, supporting traditional values and combating neo-Nazism and extremism, as well as OSCE reform, including rationalizing the election monitoring work carried out by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

In the context of providing regional stability and removing existing dividing lines, we think that the OSCE could be called upon to harmonize integration processes in Western and Eastern Europe and to ensure freedom of movement, including the streamlining of visa regimes, particularly as the OSCE was originally established to remove such dividing lines.

As part of the "Helsinki+40" process, in particular with a view to ensuring the development of European cooperation and security principles and to adapting the OSCE to the challenges of the twenty-first century, we reaffirm our readiness to consider the possibility of organizing an OSCE summit in 2015, if substantial results in those areas are achieved.

We support developing the interaction between the United Nations and the OSCE on the basis of the 2006 declaration on cooperation. We believe that the OSCE, bearing in mind the coordinating role of the United Nations, can make a significant contribution to international efforts to ensure peace and security in its area of responsibility. In our view, the greatest potential is for cooperation on combating transnational threats, international terrorism, organized crime and illegal drug trafficking. We note the high level of practical interaction between the OSCE secretariat's transnational threats department and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Their joint initiatives are yielding concrete results.

In our view, at the heart of the cooperation in that area should be efforts to combine the comparative advantages of each organization, namely, the regional format of the OSCE and the global capacities of the United Nations, thereby avoiding duplication and wasting resources, in particular in regions where both organizations are very active. That is the case, for example, in Central Asia. The priority areas for cooperation are well known: combating drug trafficking and the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, cooperation on implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and fighting terrorism, organized crime, corruption, money laundering, human trafficking and illegal migration.

It is clear that the added value of the OSCE lies also in its ability to tackle humanitarian issues, including combating human trafficking and illegal migration and encouraging tolerance and inter-civilizational dialogue. It can also help to combat xenophobia and discrimination, in particular in terms of ensuring the rights of national, religious and language minorities, which, as we know, is a particularly serious problem in a number of European countries.

We note the prospects for cooperation on a relatively new track for the OSCE, namely, developing confidence-building measures and using information and communications technologies, where the Vienna-based organization complements global United Nations efforts in the area of international information security.

At the same time, we are alarmed by attempts to introduce into OSCE practice monitoring mechanisms similar to those set up at the United Nations and to implement, through the OSCE, non-consensual documents of the General Assembly and the Human

Rights Council. We are concerned about the intention of some countries to incorporate concepts derived from resolution 1325 (2000) into the work of the OSCE, despite the absence of armed conflict in its territory.

Moreover, United Nations-OSCE cooperation does not cover a large number of important problems where there is significant room for increased cooperation, including ensuring the rights of children, which is an area in which the United Nations has extensive experience. Another such area is protecting traditional values, which is a subject under consideration by the Human Rights Council.

The situation in Ukraine was mentioned in the briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office and in a number of other statements we heard today, but it is still not clear how violent, non-constitutional regime change in that country is consistent with OSCE principles, or indeed the rule of law, which is such a fashionable subject to speak about in the Council.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office spoke approvingly of the 21 February agreement, which was signed by a number of representatives, such as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Poland and France, and allegedly by the representative of the Russian Federation. I would like to make it clear that the Russian representative to the talks on that agreement did not sign it. There were misgivings that the 21 February agreement would serve only as a smokescreen for subsequent unconstitutional action, and that is indeed what transpired.

I would now like to share with the participants in today's Security Council meeting a bit of the text of the statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation with regard to the situation in Ukraine. The Russian Federation is seriously concerned by developments in Ukraine. The 21 February agreement is not being implemented, despite the fact that its signing was witnessed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Poland and France. The United States, the European Union and other international organizations welcomed that document. The rioting militants have not been disarmed. They refuse to leave the streets of the city, which they are effectively in control of, or to leave administrative buildings. Their acts of violence continue.

We are surprised that a number of European politicians have already been quick to state that presidential elections will be held in Ukraine in May, although the 21 February agreement provides that elections should take place only after the conclusion of constitutional reform. It is clear that, for the success of that reform, all political forces in Ukraine from all regions of the country must take part, and its results should be put to a referendum. We believe in the need to fully reflect the concerns of deputies from the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, Crimea and Sevastopol, which were presented at the meeting in Krakow, Poland, on 22 February.

We are particularly concerned about the legitimacy of the actions being taken by the Ukrainian Supreme Rada. Basing their actions merely on simple revolutionary expediency, they are issuing so-called decisions and laws there, including some geared towards infringing on the humanitarian rights of Russian and other national minorities living in Ukraine. There have been calls for a virtual ban on the Russian language, the impeachment of leaders, the dissolution of parties and organizations, the closing of certain unwelcome media stations and the lifting of restrictions on neo-Nazi propaganda. There is a policy of muzzling dissidents in various regions of Ukraine through dictatorial and sometimes terrorist methods. There are now threats being made against Orthodox shrines. National radicals continue to vandalize memorials in various cities in Ukraine and, in some European capitals, their supporters have been vandalizing memorials to Soviet troops. Such events are undermining the 21 February agreement. They discredit its initiators and guarantors and pose a threat to civil peace. the stability of society and civil security.

We must note that we see no concern, in the position of several of our Western partners, for the fate of Ukraine, but rather a unilateral geopolitical agenda. We hear no principled condemnation of the acts of extremists, including of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic manifestations. Furthermore, whether deliberately or not, such actions are being further encouraged.

We get the lasting impression that the 21 February agreement, with the tacit consent of its foreign sponsors, is being used as a smokescreen for promoting forced regime change in Ukraine by creating facts on the ground, without any kind of wish to seek out a common Ukrainian consensus that is in the interest of national reconciliation. We are particularly concerned by attempts to get international structures, including the United Nations Secretariat, to support that line of reasoning.

We call on all parties in the crisis in Ukraine to show maximum responsibility, not allow any further deterioration in the situation, return the situation to the legal track and crack down on the activities of all extremists.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

I warmly welcome the President of the Swiss Confederation in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and thank him for his extensive briefing earlier today.

The body that he is chairing is the largest regional security organization partnering with the United Nations. It is unique in its comprehensive approach to security and has respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms at its core, in which participating States engage in open debate on pressing security challenges and constantly review the state of implementation of their commitments.

Let me express Lithuania's appreciation for the Swiss priorities of the OSCE chairmanship, which focus on fostering security and stability, implementing OSCE commitments and strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act. The OSCE remains a strong United Nations partner under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We look forward to the Swiss OSCE chairmanship's initiative to organize a conference devoted to strengthening cooperation between the OSCE, the United Nations and other international organizations, with a particular focus on the human dimension.

Important cases of cooperation between the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union include their coordinated response and actions during the crisis in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and a contribution to security and stability in Kosovo.

The international discussions in Geneva to address the consequences of the 2008 war in Georgia offer a good example of OSCE-United Nations cooperation in the field of mediation. Those efforts could be strengthened by the OSCE and the United Nations presence on the ground throughout Georgia.

Dramatic events are evolving before our eyes in Ukraine, and the most recent breathtaking democratic changes are an impressive reminder that it is not possible to ignore people's striving for freedom, democracy, human dignity and justice. Political power that disregards the will and expectations of the vast majority of its citizens and is concerned only with its own egoistic interests loses democratic legitimacy and the trust of its people and is not sustainable.

Lithuania welcomes the ongoing democratic change in Ukraine and the determined leadership of the Supreme Rada in that historic process. We hope that it will open the door to a quick and peaceful resolution of the political crisis, which was created by the former Government and President Yanukovych. We welcome the adoption of new decrees and other decisions in Kyiv in the past few days, which seek to introduce a new constitutional framework, consolidate the foundations for a comprehensive legal reform and resolve the remaining issues of selective justice.

Lithuania remains firmly committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as Ukraine's European integration. We believe that the OSCE, and in particular the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, have an important role to play in the process of preparing for new elections in Ukraine.

The Vilnius OSCE Ministerial Council of 2011 took a decision on the conflict cycle, equipping the OSCE with the necessary tools for the prevention of, and response to, conflicts. That asset should not be wasted. The political will to use those tools remains essential.

We welcome the OSCE's focus on addressing transnational threats. Cybersecurity threats have been on the rise, and we welcome the pioneering work by the OSCE on cybersecurity confidence-building measures at the regional level and would support a discussion on the possibility of applying that approach beyond the OSCE.

The OSCE is also at the forefront of implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially in assisting participating States in the development of relevant legislation. The OSCE should further facilitate cooperation between Central Asian States and Afghanistan, especially in the area of border management, including through the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

Energy security has direct linkages to the independence of economic and political action in international affairs and has a direct effect on national security, development and prosperity. We note the

complementary role of the OSCE in promoting energy security dialogue in line with closer cooperation with the United Nations.

Emerging regional challenges related to the use of natural resources, including water, also merit the OSCE's attention. We would appreciate the views of the Chairperson-in-Office on how the OSCE and the United Nations could best address issues related to inland water resources in Central Asia.

There cannot be lasting security and stability without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lithuania consistently supports the work of the independent OSCE institutions relating to the implementation of OSCE human rights commitments. One particular area where the OSCE needs to maintain continuous engagement is freedom of expression and media freedom. Also, the implementation of resolution 1738 (2006), on the protection of journalists, remains essential.

Women's full and equal exercise of their human rights is essential to achieving a more peaceful, secure and democratic OSCE zone. The appointment of gender focal points in field operations and departments of the OSCE and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality are essential. The work of OSCE field presences in Central Asia across all three dimensions deserves special attention, especially in the area of democratic reforms and human rights. Those activities are relevant and should be continued.

To conclude, let me assure the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office of Lithuania's continued support for his work and the priorities of his chairmanship. Lithuania will also continue supporting the OSCE role in the realization of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community, in line with the principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Burkhalter to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Burkhalter: First of all, I would like to thank all of those who have tried to pronounce my name as well as possible. They did pronounce my first name perfectly, and that is fair enough.

More seriously, I would to thank all speakers for their thoughtful interventions and, above all, for having clearly supported the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I see once again how very useful it is to have a one-page summary table of our priorities. For me, it was a clear image of support of my priorities as Chairperson-in-Office, which is very important to me. The support of the Council is of the utmost importance because we want to hold consultations throughout the year with all of our partners and all members of the Council.

I will not respond now to all the statements, but I would like to say that Council members should rest assured that we will integrate their points of view into our work as its progresses throughout our term in office.

I want to focus briefly on some of the questions and make some remarks on some issues and priorities I did not touch upon during my statement earlier. I will then conclude with a political message I would like to send at the end of the meeting.

There was in fact only one formal question, unless I am mistaken.

(*spoke in French*)

That question was from Luxembourg. I thank the representative of Luxembourg for her question. What contribution can the OSCE make in the fight against foreign fighters? I think that, in general, it must be said that what we need to do is to reduce as much as possible the causes of extremism in countries of origin. Primarily, we must act to reduce as much as possible the fertile ground in which extremism can grow. In addition, we must also step up reintegration activities for such individuals. Specifically for the OSCE, that means doing every possible to promote cooperation among security services, the exchange of good practices, research and the fight against terrorism financing.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to respond positively to the Nigerian suggestion on the same issue of enhancing cooperation and coordination among regional organizations — such as between the OSCE and the African Union.

With regard to the issues I did not mention earlier that members brought up, I wish to say to Jordan, first of all, that we are fully aware of the Mediterranean partnership of the OSCE; indeed, we would like to make links between our priorities and that partnership. A concrete example is the issue of kidnapping for ransom:

we will try, with the Mediterranean partnership, to make progress on that issue.

To France, Chile and others, I would like to say that, although I did not mention the issues of conventional arms control and the modernization of the Vienna Document, they are very important to us. We must be realistic. We know that we will not be able to move forward very rapidly on such issues, but we do want to engage in dialogue on conventional arms control and want to modernize the Vienna Document.

As for the final political messages I would like to send during today's meeting, there are four. First, I would like to say that, in our globalized world, there is greater need for regional organization for security. The conception of the OSCE is useful for the twenty-first century. What we need is the capacity to enhance confidence and to act. The OSCE has the capacity to enhance confidence because it is a platform for dialogue and acts as a common roof for the 57 participating States, meaning we can try to reduce lines of division in this area. In terms of our capacity for action, the OSCE brings a comprehensive security conception — a multidimensional approach that is so important today. It is a major asset that should even be exported to other regions. Furthermore, with regard to the capacity to act, I would like to recall our action on the ground — the fact that the OSCE is a field-based organization, and that is very important.

The second message is the fact that the Swiss chairmanship is fully committed to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as with other regional organizations. There is great potential in particular in the field of mediation support and training.

The third message is that our chairmanship wants most seriously to build bridges between East and West. I would like to thank all of the members of the Council for their constructive reactions to what I said about Ukraine, our proposal to establish an international contact grou, and our decisions to send a special envoy and core group for a needs assessment mission, and to prepare potential human rights and election observation missions, in case the Ukrainian authorities make such a request, as we hope they will.

In addition to the measures on Ukraine I mentioned in my statement and have just recalled, based on the statements made today, I think that the involvement of another important OSCE institution — the High Commissioner on National Minorities — should be involved. The High Commission works with a conflict-prevention mandate and could help defuse tension in the eastern part of the country and in Crimea.

The last message I would like to send today is the fact that the chairmanship wants to work for and with the people, and above all for and with young people. We regard it as a key task of politics to provide good prospects for the generations to come, and we have high expectations of the 57 youth ambassadors of the model OSCE in negotiation of a youth action plan.

Let me conclude by stating that Switzerland highly values the United Nations, we remain fully committed to the objectives of the United Nations and we are determined to support its efforts to advance peace and security, which are also the basis of the Swiss Constitution.

The President: I thank Mr. Burkhalter for the additional comments he has just made.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7118

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7118th meeting
Tuesday, 25 February 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24422 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedures, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Since the Secretary-General briefed the Council last month (see S/PV.7096), we have seen new and significant developments in relation to the Syrian crisis, with the holding of the much-anticipated second Geneva Conference on Syria and the Security Council's welcome adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), regarding the humanitarian situation. The Secretary-General is committed to making every effort to help advance both of those important initiatives.

On the Middle East peace process, we are nearing a defining moment. United States Secretary of State Kerry's months-long work to address Israeli and Palestinian aspirations and concerns in a fair and balanced manner has opened a credible political horizon for achieving a two-State solution. Any meaningful political initiative must continue to strive towards a comprehensive settlement, and it must address all final status issues in line with the principles outlined in the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles — including land for peace — the road map and previous agreements between the parties.

International engagement, which is critical, remains strong. On 1 February in Munich, Quartet principals were briefed on progress in the negotiations. Secretary of State Kerry is continuing his consultations with the leaders over the United States framework proposal, which is meant to serve as a basis for continued negotiations, meeting with President Abbas in Paris on 19 February. We count on the continued support extended to those efforts by regional stakeholders, underlining the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, which is the most viable way for attaining regional peace and yielding socioeconomic and security benefits for all peoples in the Middle East. As the Secretary-General told the Council last month, if the leaders are prepared to take the bold decisions required, he will also push ahead on the positive agenda of peace dividends for both sides.

Ultimately, any genuine intention to pursue peace requires strong leadership. Now is the time for domestic constituencies to put their agendas behind the peace agenda and for the leaders to reach out to their respective publics to raise awareness of the benefits of peace. For Palestinians, a negotiated peace settlement holds the promise of allowing it to become a fully recognized Member State of equal standing. For Israel, only a negotiated two-State solution will bring it the security and recognition it deserves in the region and beyond.

The situation on the ground remains fragile. In the West Bank, Israeli security forces carried out a total of 424 search and arrest operations. A total of 519 Palestinians were arrested, and 218 Palestinians were injured, including during demonstrations against the barrier. Two Israeli soldiers were also injured.

Clashes increased in and around Palestinian refugee camps, most notably in early February in the Al-Arroub and Al-Jalazoun camps, following the killing on 29 January of one Palestinian from the Al-Jalazoun camp near Ramallah and the Ofra settlement after allegedly opening fire at Israeli security forces. More than 30 Palestinian protesters were injured by Israeli live ammunition and rubber-coated metal bullets, while two Israeli soldiers were injured by stone- and Molotov cocktail-throwing.

Israeli security forces reported having foiled several terrorist attacks on Israel allegedly planned by individuals in the West Bank. That included the arrest of an alleged Al-Qaida cell on 22 January and the uncovering of several arms caches. Palestinian security forces, working to maintain order and security, safely defused some unexploded ordnance between 22 January and 3 February and arrested Hizb ut-Tahrir Islamic militants on 8 and 9 February.

Attacks by settlers on Palestinian property included damage to more than 3,000 trees and saplings and some 80 vehicles. On 6 February, three settlers were reportedly charged for setting fire to two vehicles and spray painting stars of David in the Palestinian village of Farata in November. During another attack, on 18 February, the tires of some 30 cars were slashed

and anti-Arab graffiti was painted in the Sharafat neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli police reported the arrest in four operations of more than 10 settlers reportedly involved in attacks on Palestinians or their property. Palestinian stone- and Molotov-cocktail-throwing attacks — on the rise in recent months — resulted in three settlers injured.

The reporting period registered increased funding and incentives by the Israeli Government for existing settlements. Continued settlement activity, including in occupied East Jerusalem, is illegal and erodes hope for the two-State solution by undermining ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing demolition of Palestinian residential and livelihood structures in Area C, particularly in the Jordan Valley and East Jerusalem. A total of 107 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of 175 Palestinians. Those demolitions must stop and Palestinians must be given access to a fair and inclusive planning regime. We are also increasingly worried by reports of impeded access for the humanitarian community in the delivery of emergency shelter and other assistance. This month, the International Committee of the Red Cross decided to suspend its distribution of tents to people affected by house demolitions in the Jordan Valley, after noting a pattern of obstructions and confiscations of those items by Israeli authorities since the beginning of 2013.

We have reiterated our position on the continued practice of administrative detention by Israel, including of elected Palestinian Legislative Council members, and the six prisoners on hunger strike since January. Administrative detainees must be either charged or released. We are concerned about today's report that a Palestinian prisoner died after he was transferred from an Israeli jail to the hospital. We will continue to follow the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention closely.

Visits by Israeli groups, including senior officials, to the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif resulted in clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli police accompanying those groups. Incitement or provocations from any quarter must cease and the sanctity of holy sites of all faiths must be respected.

Turning to Gaza, there are troubling signs that the ceasefire understanding of November 2012 is eroding in both of its main requirements: the end of hostilities and the opening of the crossing for people and goods. In the past two months, we have seen more rockets being fired at Israel, border incidents and Israeli operations causing death or injury to civilians.

We condemn the increased rocket fire. This reporting period saw the firing of 44 rockets and mortars, of which 15 landed in Israel. Israel conducted six incursions and seven air strikes into Gaza, resulting in the death of two militants and injuries to 10 Palestinians. Israeli forces also reported dismantling an improvised explosive device on the border fence on 18 February. Palestinian activities and protests multiplied in the vicinity of the border fence and were met by increased Israeli live fire, resulting in two Palestinians shot dead and 16 injured. We are deeply concerned about that rise in violence and we call on all parties to act in accordance with international law.

Due to the ongoing closure of Gaza, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) urgently needs an additional $30 million to sustain critical emergency operations in Gaza, without which food aid will be cut back. We call on all donors, including those who have traditionally supported the Agency, to contribute to UNRWA's emergency appeals.

The recent Israeli decision to allow the entry of 1,000 tons of cement and other construction materials for flood relief is positive. However, contrary to expectations, work on United Nations projects is still not back at the level originally agreed by the Israeli authorities, and more than 20 projects remain stalled since November 2013 due to lack of Israeli approval. We continue to call for the Israeli approval of all United Nations projects, and the resumption of already approved projects. We also call for a lifting of restrictions on exports and transfers of goods to the West Bank and Israel, and for permitting the import of construction materials for the private sector. We hope that the Rafah crossing with Egypt will soon resume normal operations.

Meanwhile, efforts to bridge the Palestinian divide continued. Fatah and Hamas delegations met in Gaza to discuss the implementation of existing reconciliation agreements, including the formation of a national consensus Government headed by President Abbas, and the organization of general elections. Ultimately, only the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank, under the legitimate Palestinian Authority, based on the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization,

can pave the way for a durable solution for Gaza as part of political progress towards peace. Gaza, too, must reap the peace dividends of a negotiated two-State solution.

Allow me now to turn to the Syrian conflict, whose toll of death and destruction in Syria and in the region continues to mount tragically, pointing urgently to the need for a political solution. After many months of effort, the Secretary-General convened in Montreux, on 22 January, the second Geneva Conference on Syria. More than 40 countries and international organizations participated and underlined their commitment to supporting a political solution to the Syrian conflict. They urged the Syrian sides to negotiate and reach an agreement on the full implementation of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/523, annex), as indeed the Council did in its resolution 2118 (2013). As the Council noted in that resolution, the communiqué sets out a number of key steps, beginning with the establishment of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers, formed by mutual consent.

The first round of intra-Syrian talks began on 23 January and continued for eight days. They included several direct sessions, as well as bilateral meetings with Joint Special Representative Brahimi and his team. The second round of talks took place from 10 to 15 February. Joint Special Representative Brahimi will brief the Council in the coming weeks, so I will therefore not go into specifics. The progress thus far has been limited, confirming the deep rift between the two sides. Yet it is no small feat that those long-awaited negotiations have finally begun, and both sides remain committed to sitting at the table. That is something on which we must try to build.

We are grateful to the Governments of the Russian Federation and the United States, and all in the region and globally, for showing vision and helping to organize that important process. We will continue to need the help of many of the countries who attended the Montreux Conference, as well as some who were not there.

The Council held extensive discussions on the escalating humanitarian toll that the conflict continues to exert on the Syrian people. The Secretary-General wholeheartedly welcomed the Council's adoption of resolution 2139 (2014). We all hope that the resolution will allow all humanitarian actors on the ground to significantly increase their reach to all those in need.

The ongoing hostilities in Syria also continue to impact the vulnerable community of Palestine refugees. The situation is deteriorating in Yarmouk, near Damascus, where 16,000 Palestine refugees remain trapped. While some assistance has reached those in need since 18 January, UNRWA continues to experience sporadic access. We call on all parties to grant UNRWA uninterrupted access to the civilian population of Yarmouk and other civilian areas.

On 10 and 18 February, explosions took place near UNRWA schools in Muzeirib, killing 18 people. We deplore those indiscriminate attacks and remind the warring parties of their obligations under international law to protect all civilians.

The situation in the Golan continues to be of deep concern. Heavy clashes between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition and shelling continued in the area of limitation in proximity to the area of separation. On 18 and 19 February, artillery and mortar fire rounds from the Bravo side landed across the ceasefire line. There was no response from the Alpha side. We are also looking into the reports of an air strike yesterday in the border area between Lebanon and Syria, and we urge all parties to avoid escalation. Those developments have the potential to escalate and to jeopardize the ceasefire between Israel and Syria, as well as to heighten tensions between Lebanon and Israel.

In Lebanon, the formation of a Government of national interest was a major positive development against a backdrop of continued tensions stemming from a spate of deadly terrorist attacks, as well as incidents of shelling and shooting from across the Syrian border into Lebanon.

On 21 January, a suicide bombing in the Haret Hraik suburb of Beirut was claimed by a Lebanese branch of Jabhat Al-Nusra. On 1 February, another Jabhat Al-Nusra suicide bomber detonated a car bomb in Hermel. On 3 February, a suicide attack took place in Choueifat, in south Beirut. On 19 February, a double suicide bombing in the Beirut suburb of Bir Al-Hassan, which targeted the Iranian Cultural Centre, was claimed by the Abdallah Azzam Brigades.

Shelling from Syria targeted Lebanese populated areas in the Bekaa Valley and killed two people in the Akkar region. There were at least two airstrikes by Syrian aircraft in violation of Lebanese sovereignty. In Tripoli, continued fighting between the Alawite

and Sunni communities caused at least five fatalities, including one Lebanese soldier. The Lebanese Armed Forces have had a number of successes in capturing militants wanted in connection with the recent bombings in Beirut and Hermel, and acted to contain the movement of armed men and weapons between Lebanon and Syria.

The Secretary-General congratulated President Sleiman and Prime Minister Salam following the formation, on 15 February, of the Government of national interest under Prime Minister Tamam Salam. The Secretary-General noted that the inclusion of most political parties in the Cabinet was important to address the serious security threats and humanitarian challenges facing the country, and in order to organize the presidential elections on time next month. Members of the new Cabinet are working on agreeing a ministerial statement outlining the Government's agenda.

The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and along the Blue Line remained calm, despite almost daily Israeli air violations of Lebanese airspace. Pursuant to the recommendations of the International Support Group for Lebanon, on 20 February the Lebanese Armed Forces and the United Nations launched a coordination mechanism for international assistance to the army. We welcome France's offer to host a meeting of the International Support Group in Paris on 5 March to support the political process in Lebanon and its State institutions.

In conclusion, allow me to return to the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. It is the United Nations sincere desire to see 2014 as the year that bears witness to a comprehensive settlement realizing the vision of two States for two peoples: Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition of each other's legitimate rights, including self-determination, with each State ensuring equal civil rights for all its citizens. The Middle East region suffers from multiple crises and faultlines that require urgent attention, not least the conflict in Syria and its impact on neighbouring States. But the efforts deployed over the past seven months towards achieving a solution of the Palestinian-Israeli issue, in the form of a negotiated two-State solution, have come closer than at any point in recent time to making a real and much-needed contribution to regional stability. It is therefore in our collective interests, as well as that of both the Israelis and the Palestinians, to invest in the success of that process and ensure that it is credible and just for both parties.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7119

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7119th meeting
Wednesday, 26 February 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

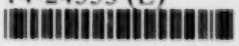
President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Rutilo
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24553 (E)



Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item of the agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/125, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2140 (2014).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2140 (2014), on Yemen. By its unanimous adoption of the resolution, the Security Council has delivered four clear messages.

First, the international community continues to focus on Yemen and wants to support the Yemeni people towards a more stable and prosperous future. More support is needed to help the Yemeni Government to improve security and provide humanitarian assistance.

Secondly, the next steps in the transition are clear. Those are constitutional electoral reform, followed by elections. All constituencies must work together to implement the recommendations of the National Dialogue Conference. That includes the recommendation of the report of the good governance working group on who can hold future high office.

Thirdly, those wishing to derail the political transition will face swift and firm consequences through the new Sanctions Committee. The resolution is clear: "the transition process requires turning the page from the presidency of Ali Abdullah Saleh" (resolution 2140 (2014), fourteenth preambular paragraph).

Fourthly, when the Council works together and delivers tough messages, it can create the catalyst for change.

I would like to end by taking this opportunity to commend the continued efforts of Special Adviser of the Secretary-General Jamal Benomar and of the Gulf Cooperation Council to assis Yemen through that transition process.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Three years ago, peaceful protesters thronged the streets of Sana'a, seeking to fulfil their aspirations for a more open and democratic Government. On Yemen, the Security Council has been able to consistently speak with a strong and clear voice. Together, we have welcomed the efforts by President Hadi Mansour and the people of Yemen to implement meaningful reform, and we stand firmly committed to supporting Yemen throughout the transition process.

We underscore our continuing support for the leadership of President Hadi Mansour and reform-minded leaders within the Government and civil society. We recognize their significant contributions in forging consensus during a challenging period, and we encourage the Yemeni Government and all Yemeni stakeholders to continue moving ahead with the political transition in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative and implementation mechanism.

The Council has been assertive in supporting Yemen throughout its transition. With resolution 2014 (2011), we sent a clear signal of international support for an orderly political transition on the basis of the GCC initiative, which led to a peaceful change of leadership. In resolution 2051 (2012), we supported the full and timely implementation of that initiative, and also called for a fully inclusive, participatory and transparent National Dialogue Conference. In a

presidential statement last year (S/PRST/2013/20), the Council warned potential spoilers not to stand in the way of the progress, helping to enable the necessary conditions for the launching of a successful conference.

And today we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2140 (2014) on Yemen, which welcomes and celebrates the conclusion of Yemen's historic National Dialogue Conference. The resolution underscores the importance of turning the page on Saleh's presidency to meet the aspirations of the Yemeni people, including guarantees for the representation of women in Government.

The Council has made clear that we remain firmly committed to supporting Yemen as it implements subsequent steps in the transition process, including constitutional reform and national elections. With today's resolution, the Council has taken the forward-leaning step of setting up a committee that is prepared to sanction individuals for impeding the ongoing transition in Yemen. With the establishment of that mechanism, the Council is better equipped to respond in a timely manner to those who seek to derail progress for the Yemeni people.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): We welcome the Council's unanimity, which allowed for the adoption of resolution 2140 (2014). It shows that, when the Council speaks with one voice in crisis situations, the establishment of an orderly peaceful democratic transition is possible.

The resolution we have just adopted sends three clear messages. First, the Council and the international community remain fully committed to Yemen and support a democratic transition that responds to the aspirations of the Yemeni people. Secondly, the next stages in the transition are clear — the drafting of a new constitution, electoral reform and the swift holding of general elections. The resolution underscores that it is important to turn the page on the presidency of Ali Abdullah Saleh in order to move forward in the transition. Thirdly, the actors that want to derail the political transition must pay the consequences, and that is reason for the establishment by the Security Council of a Sanctions Committee and a Panel of Experts.

With this resolution, the United Nations confirms its support for Yemen's legitimate and democratic aspirations at present in the region, and we hope that it will be able to show the same determination on other crises under way.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Sallal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express our congratulations to the delegation of the Republic of Lithuania on its accession of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish it every success. Let me also thank the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for an excellent presidency of the Council last month.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express our sincere congratulations to the delegations of Chad, Chile and Nigeria on their accession to non-permanent membership in the Security Council for the period 2014-2015. They will surely make important contributions to the Council's work.

I am honoured to convey to the Council the greetings of His Excellency Mr. Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen.

Despite the difficulties facing my country in the past three years, which was initially at risk of falling into a civil war, all elements and political parties made concessions and put the interests of the nation and the Yemeni people above all to avoid such threats to the country. Furthermore, international and regional support also had a major role in avoiding a slide into chaos in Yemen.

Allow me to reaffirm the appreciation of President Hadi Mansour and the Yemeni people and Government for the role undertaken by the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the United Nations and the Security Council in bolstering the transitional political process in Yemen, and in particular for the holding of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. As expressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen in this very Chamber on 27 September 2013 (see S/PV.7037), that was a historic step on the path to a new Yemen — a Yemen based on democracy, good governance and equal citizenship for all its sons. That path has been chosen by the Yemeni people of their own feel will to bring about change. The Yemeni people decided to initiate dialogue among all parties, as reflected in the signing of the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanism.

Despite the serious challenges facing my country in the political, security, economic and humanitarian fields, the governance and wisdom of President Hadi Mansour and the major efforts that he has made and continues to make have prevented those threats from

overcoming the country. He has been determined to achieve success during the transitional period, in accordance with the GCC initiative and Security Council resolutions in that regard. No effort has been spared in overcoming all obstacles to its implementation, including the implementation of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference in a way that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

Yemen would like to be a unique and successful model, not only in the region but indeed in the entire world. We do not wish to return to square one — to confrontations, violence and a slide towards civil war, God forbid. The scope and threat of international terrorism and instability is not unique to Yemen; rather, it is spread throughout the region and the world. It is therefore very important for the Council to stand with Yemen and support President Hadi Mansour's efforts to move forward at this sensitive stage.

Allow me to quote from the statement that President Hadi Mansour made on the second anniversary of the signing of the Gulf initiative.

> "We all remember our brothers' response in the Gulf in helping Yemen to find its way out of the crisis in the framework of the Gulf initiative. That initiative was a clear road map for a transfer of power and we remain committed to its full implementation."

Furthermore, at the end of the National Dialogue Conference, he stated

> "With your support, we shall continue sincerely to implement the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference in a way that will allow us to build a new Yemen that our people can be proud of and that will contribute to the international community's security and the world's stability."

Today, with the end of the National Dialogue Conference, Yemen has come a long way towards realizing the aspirations of the Yemeni people for change. The Conference was an outstanding model wherby all parties sat at the table for dialogue in a civilized manner. All opinions were expressed, even though they conflicted from time to time. They were accepted and the views of others were heard. The nation's interests were placed above those of any individual party or tribe in reaching a consensus.

I would like to underscore that the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference, which is a consensus of outputs and recommendations, is the result of a dialogue between all Yemeni parties and elements on the political scene under the direct leadership of the President of the Republic of Yemen. The international community had a major role in closing gaps between points of view in Yemen and in providing the expertise necessary for progress in the Dialogue.

The Yemeni dialogue was a clear example of constructive cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization, namely, the GCC, in which the Security Council approved the GCC initiative and its time-bound implementation mechanism and adopted resolutions 2014 (2011) and 2051 (2012).

I am duty-bound to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Adviser Jamal Benomar. They made major efforts to provide expertise and recommendations to bridge differences between the various parties in the Dialogue. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Secretary-General of the GCC, as well as the Ambassadors of the 10 States that coordinated the GCC initiative, the permanent members of the Security Council and the States members of the GCC and the European Union, and all those who worked with us.

The Government of Yemen has worked hard to overcome the injustice and failings of the past by addressing the root causes of the conflict within Yemeni society, which are associated with decision-making mechanisms and the fair distribution of resources under the rule of law and good governance. Many decisions were recently taken at the national level with regard to employees separated from their positions in the civilian, military and security sectors. That included the adoption of decree No.63/2013, concerning the issue of land in the southern provinces, a strategy for the implementation of the 20-point solution for the south and decision No.191/2013, concerning compensation for victims of human rights violations.

The Government of Yemen attaches great importance to economic issues and sustainable development. In spite of the fact that the outcomes and recommendations from the National Conference gave sufficient attention to the economic situation, regrettably Yemeni citizens continue to experience a difficult economic reality. Many international meetings and conferences have been held in that regard. I urge our friends who have made pledges to honour them, so as to lessen the economic burden on our citizens and

ensure the success of the Government's efforts in that regard.

Allow me now to highlight some of the major challenges currently facing Yemen.

First, there is the issue of the worsening humanitarian situation. This is a potential impending calamity, given the growing number of internally displaced persons, immigrants and returning refugees from the Horn of Africa. It also places an additional burden on the State budget owing to rising levels of poverty and unemployment among young people. That requires additional support for the emergency humanitarian appeal made by the Yemeni Government and the United Nations.

Secondly, we face ongoing attempts by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula to move further into several provinces. That group has exploited the exceptional circumstances in the country and the dire economic situation in order to carry out terrorist acts intended to undermine the State by targeting various military and security installations and foreign and Government facilities. I would like to stress that Yemen needs a stronger stance on the part of the international community as well as support to the Government and the Yemeni people in order to confront terrorism, including the provision of moral, material and logistical support to build up our capacity to combat terrorism.

The Security Council has emphasized that both Yemen and the international community have called for a united Yemen. That is necessary in order to preserve the country's security and stability, as well as international peace and security. We are confident that the Council will continue to support Yemen as it always has. We are also certain that, in addition to its concern for the political track, the Council will now also focus on economic, security and humanitarian issues, which offer a genuine guarantee for the implementation of the outcomes and recommendations of the National Dialogue Conference. That will contribute to achieving the aspirations of the Yemeni people, especially its young people, for a democratic society.

I thank the Security Council for all its contributions and support to Yemen.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7120

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7120th meeting
Wednesday, 26 February 2014, 10.25 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shearman
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing of the Security Council mission to Mali (31 January to 3 February 2014)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24624 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing of the Security Council mission to Mali (31 January to 3 February 2014)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the co-leads of the Security Council mission to Mali, the Permanent Representative of France, Mr. Gérard Araud, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chad, Mr. Bante Mangaral.

I now give the floor to Mr. Araud.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): From 1 to 3 February, I had the privilege, together with my Chadian colleague Mr. Bante Mangaral, to lead the Security Council mission to Mali.

During the visit, the Council met with the Malian authorities returned by the elections held in 2013. We had discussions with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister Tatam Ly and several members of the Government. We also met with the armed groups that are signatories to the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, as well as those that have adhered to the Agreement.

On 2 February, we travelled to Mopti, where we met with local authorities and civil society representatives from Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu. On that occasion, we visited the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) camp at Mopti and evaluated the level of deployment of MINUSMA.

Among the numerous lessons we can draw from the mission, I would like to underscore two points in particular: first — with regard to political dialogue — any lasting solution for northern Mali must be found by the Malians themselves and receive the ongoing support of the international community; and, secondly — with regard to security — any lasting improvement to security in northern Mali will require a comprehensive political solution.

First, on the subject of political dialogue, there is the fact that any sustainable solution for northern Mali should be found by the Malians themselves, with ongoing support by the international community. We had an open and fruitful dialogue on that subject with the Malian authorities. The President of Mali noted that any new political agreement should be reached within Mali itself, and the members of the Security Council, for their part, said that they were working to support the work of the democratically elected Malian authorities.

The members of the Council also recalled that the armed groups should be disarmed within the framework of a negotiated political process, in accordance with the commitments under the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement. The Prime Minister of Mali highlighted that the two processes of disarmament and dialogue were making parallel progress. He also stated that the modalities for disarmament would have to be laid out in detail in coordination with MINUSMA. The armed groups, for their part, asked that the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement be fully and quickly implemented. They stated that they would like the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MINUSMA to support that process. We reminded them of their obligation to put their elements under cantonment and engage in negotiations with the ultimate aim of disarmament.

We perceived a lack of trust between the two parties. We expressed our support for Algeria's efforts to bring the two parties' positions in line with each other. We welcome the fact that, before we left Mali, the Government laid out the elements for a road map out of the crisis. We welcome the adoption a few days ago by the Government and the armed groups, with the support of MINUSMA, of a method for cantonment, and we now request the parties — both the Government and the armed groups — to sincerely commit to that path without hesitation. The Security Council will continue to monitor the fulfilment of those commitments. We once again commended the Special Representative and MINUSMA for their support to that dialogue.

Secondly, in terms of security, bringing lasting security to northern Mali will necessarily require a comprehensive political solution. Operation Cerval, the French operation, and MINUSMA have noted that the terrorist groups still have the capacity to carry out operations. We recalled the urgency of MINUSMA being rapidly and fully deployed in the north, in particular

in the context of Operation Serval's drawdown. The European operation in Mali briefed us on its work in training the Malian army, including practical education on respect for human rights.

The representatives of civil society in Mali stressed that there would be no lasting peace in Mali without development. Only by offering employment opportunities will Malian youth be prevented from joining the ranks of terrorist groups or drug traffickers. The Special Representative felt that the mutual commitments undertaken by the Malian authorities and the international financial partners in terms of Mali's development should be fulfilled following the Brussels conference of 15 May 2013.

To conclude, I would like, on behalf of the Security Council, to express my sincere thanks to the authorities of Mali for the welcome they extended to the Council and for the constructive and frank exchanges that we had. I would also like to thank the Secretariat and MINUSMA, in particular Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their valuable assistance in organizing the trip.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Mangaral.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I fully align myself with the briefing by Ambassador Gérard Araud on the Security Council mission to Mali. I would just like to add a few comments.

The arrival of the Security Council mission in Mali gave rise to much hope among Malians, who are weary of the stalemate in the negotiations that are the only way to return to lasting peace and a normalization of the situation. We note their enthusiasm and genuine willingness to proceed to inclusive negotiations. All parts of Malian society are unanimous on the fact that the roots of the crisis affecting their country are neither religious nor tribal, as the population is mostly Muslim and the fact that several ethnic groups live side by side in almost every part of the country has led to a number of mixed marriages and has woven solidarity and tolerance into the country's social fabric.

While the Malian authorities recognize the merits of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, they believe that it is time for Mali to take ownership of the Agreement. At the same time, they are exploring new initiatives, such as the Algerian process that is currently under way.

Despite the significant progress made on normalizing situation, real challenges persist in the areas of security, politics, food, health, and the legal and educational systems. Crime persists, due to the lack of legal authority, in particular in the north of the country, despite a limited return of administrative rule in some parts of the country.

The Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement is a bone of contention between the signatories and certain armed groups who joined the Agreement. The signatories complained that they were ignored or excluded from the process leading to the resumption of negotiations. We also see divisions within the armed groups, for example in the Arab Azawad movement, which has two different factions, each claiming legitimacy. That could complicate things when the negotiations are relaunched.

The Government has been accused of coopting parties or candidates, whose representative nature is often contested by their base. The Government is also accused of giving preference to armed groups instead of to the victims of those same armed groups.

Women, although they are in the majority and very involved in civil society organizations, are feeling the weight of sociocultural and religious pressures that make certain subjects taboo, such as sexual violence, physical abuse, forced marriage and divorce, as the perpetrators of such acts often cannot be held liable under the law.

Despite the prominent role that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali plays alongside Malians in their search for peace and stability, it is seen as a kind of second Government.

The reconstitution of the jihadist groups in Mali's interior and along its borders is a cause for concern not just for Mali but for the entire Sahel region. As President Buyoya of Rwanda stated, Mali's priorities — to develop a security strategy and the capacity to fight against transnational terrorism — will progressively become those of the countries of the Sahel.

The road map that the Malian Government has settled on is a hopeful one and a good opportunity for the relaunching of the peace talks.

Finally, all of the international community represented in Mali expressed their willingness to support Mali in the dialogue aimed at laying the foundations for lasting peace.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I should like to express appreciation to all of the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities on behalf of the Council.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7121

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7121st meeting
Wednesday, 26 February 2014, 10.40 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Kazragienė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shearman
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

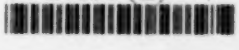
Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-24630 (E)



Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Ramos-Horta, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bissau.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil, to participate in this meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/105, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ramos-Horta.

Mr. Ramos-Horta: Speaking here from Bissau, I would like to let the Council know that with me is my very loyal team — the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) family, who sustain the United Nations presence here. To my right is Mr. Gana Fofang, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative; to my left is my chief of staff; and, following the order from the left, are our head of administration, Guadalupe Sousa, head of the Human Rights Section, Antero Lopes, head of security sector reform and rule-of-law assistance, Martinho Chachiua, head of the Political Affairs Section, Linda de Souza, also from Political Affairs, Ruddy Flores, from Political Affairs, Musafiri Prosper, from the Strategic Planning Unit, and Raluca Eddon, from the Peacebuilding Support Office. Other staff who do not fit at the table are sitting behind us in the room. We all extend our warmest greetings to you, Madam President, and to members of the Security Council.

We wish to express our utmost satisfaction with and appreciation for the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/19) issued by the Council as a result of our interaction in November 2013. The report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2014/105) covers developments in Guinea-Bissau since my last briefing, on 26 November 2013 (see S/PV.7070). Now I would like to highlight some developments since the report was drafted.

On the political front, after much delay the largest party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), held its national congress, from 2 to 11 February. Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, former Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure under former President Koumba Yalá and former Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, was elected leader with a majority of over 60 per cent of the votes. The candidate with the second highest number of votes, Braima Camará, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Guinea-Bissau, obtained 37 per cent of the votes.

Although the contest was bitterly fought, the defeated candidates graciously conceded. For his part, Mr. Simões Pereira called on his rivals to join him in promoting reconciliation and unity in the party. Mr. Simões Pereira's election offers real hope for a new generation of leaders to emerge and foster the required changes for the country. His election has generated a very positive mood across the nation. He faces a challenge to unite the party.

Nevertheless, there are still pending issues between Mr. Pereira, supported by his constituencies in the party, and the candidate with the second highest number of votes, Mr. Camará, including on the composition of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau. Negotiations between Mr. Pereira and Mr. Camará are ongoing. I continue to engage all in active dialogue,

providing ideas and advice when asked. I am confident that they will reach the necessary compromises to enable stability and governance.

While Mr. Pereira is expected to lead PAIGC in the legislative elections, now scheduled for 13 April through a recently issued presidential decree, discussions are still ongoing within the party on whom to support for the presidential elections.

The divisions in the second largest party, the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), have continued and led to the emergence of four presidential candidates among the senior members of the party. While the historic PRS leader and founder, former President Koumba Yalá, publicly declared that he would abandon active politics and decided to endorse Mr. Nuno Na Bian, Director of Civil Aviation in the country, for the presidential elections, the party itself nominated Mr. Abel Incada, a known businessman and Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce, as its official presidential candidate. Opposing the party's decision, two senior members declared themselves independent candidates as well.

The mushrooming of independent candidates is symptomatic of the fragmented nature of politics in the country, further compounded by the crisis since the coup on 12 April 2012. So far, there are 12 candidates, eight independent and four from the political parties, still excluding PAIGC, all running for the presidency. A presidential decree, issued yesterday, shortens the legal timelines to allow for the election on 13 April and provides the date of 5 March as the deadline for candidates to submit applications to the Supreme Court to run in the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Supreme Court says that it needs about 12 days to properly scrutinize the list of candidates. Some 40 political parties are expected to contest the parliamentary elections. However, on the basis of the existing electronic data system, donated and set up by Timorese electoral and information technology specialists, the Supreme Court may be able to scrutinize the list of candidates in about five days.

As I have mentioned, following a consultation process with stakeholders, in particular the national political actors, as well as international partners, Transitional President Nhamadjo formally announced, on 21 February, that the legislative and presidential elections would finally be held on 13 April. That adjustment was justified in order to enable the conclusion of the pioneering information technology-based voters' registration process throughout the country, while political will was also being secured. If all runs smoothly, the electoral process could therefore be concluded before discussions on the renewal of the mandate of UNIOGBIS are held by the Security Council in May.

The Government declared the end of the voter registration process on 10 February. The 15-day period for the exhibition and correction of the provisional voter lists started on 18 February and is ongoing. It is expected that the final voters list will be ready by the end of next week. The provisional figures indicate that more than 770,000 voters have been registered. That is at least 95 per cent of the estimated potential of the voting population of 810,961. That is indeed a surprising, impressive record.

The National Electoral Commission, with technical support from an international expert team hired through UNDP, has been gearing up to ensure that all logistics are in place to conduct elections operations. The first batch of election materials was delivered on 12 February. A civic education outreach campaign will also be conducted. I would like to commend all donors to the electoral process, especially Timor-Leste, the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) and Nigeria, and those who have contributed to the UNDP-managed basket fund in support of the activities run by the National Electoral Commission, notably the European Union, for their generosity.

The voter registration has been an undeniable success. Timor-Leste, Nigeria and ECOWAS must be commended for their support and provision of critical equipment for that essential step, enabling the electoral process and the restoration of constitutional order. Timor-Leste allocated $6 million and deployed more than 20 Timorese election advisers and information technology specialists, all working round the clock in a very challenging environment. So far, ECOWAS has disbursed $5.6 million. Nigeria has provided well over $2 million in support of the activities and needs of the technical electoral support office.

A national plan for electoral security is being implemented, operationally supported by UNIOGBIS and the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Bissau, with the establishment of national joint command structures to be led by the police. The military are to assume a reserved role. In that framework, a successful training of 60 national and

international senior police and military officers was conducted on 14 February, at the National Defence Institute, supported by UNIOGBIS. Furthermore, about 1,500 national police and military are expected to be trained in the next few weeks, in a partnership between UNIOGBIS and Brazil. UNIOGBIS will also gradually strengthen its presence in the regions during the elections.

While we are mindful that intra-party issues are still being worked out, which is to be expected in such kind of scenarios, the technical conditions for elections are in place and no further delays should be considered. Elections are to finally be held no later than 13 April and no further excuses should be accepted at all. The Council's express support in that regard would be highly appreciated.

Each day that passes affects the economy and the livelihoods of the people. The mission of the International Monetary Fund to Bissau earlier this month noted that the economy was still strongly affected by the economic and political consequences of the April 2012 coup and had not recovered. The economy is likely to have grown by only 0.3 per cent in 2013. Civil servants are currently owed at least three months' salary, and in many families they are the single source of income. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated, despite direct support to the population by international partners through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

I urge all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring a meaningful election in a climate of peace and security. Citizens must be able to fully exercise all their rights, including the right to freedom of expression and assembly. At the same time, all political parties and their supporters must play their part in ensuring a climate of peace and security. The media must engage in fair, equitable and unbiased reporting.

The defence forces and security institutions must act within the limits of their roles, as defined in the Constitution and specific laws, and refrain from any interference and intimidation. They should also ensure the security of State institutions, including the ones involved in the electoral process, as well as the security of all candidates.

While mindful of the record of rule of might in the country and the series of incidents reported, I have no concrete reason thus far to state that the defence forces and security institutions will interfere with the process as the elections approach. We will continue to be vigilant, while seeking the Council's express support in that regard.

Similarly, I believe that the political parties and candidates, as well as their supporters, will show the utmost discipline and fully respect the verdict of the people and the elections' results to be announced by the Supreme Court which, as the Council knows is the final arbiter in the event of electoral complaints and also declares the final results. I recommend that the Security Council consider a robust and prompt response, including targeted sanctions, to any attempt to undermine the electoral process and post-electoral stability.

It is with regret that I note the inability of the authorities to follow up the investigations into human rights abuses and serious crimes, such as the beating of the Minister of Transport and Communication on 5 November 2013. It is also a matter of concern that no conclusive judicial action has been taken on either the violation of the integrity of the Nigerian Embassy, on 8 October, or with regard to the case of the abusive onboarding of alleged Syrian citizens who ended up traveling on fake Turkish service passports to Portugal, despite an inquiry that has been completed.

While I commend international partners for their generous contributions, which have made the prospect of elections and the return to constitutional order possible, I would urge them to look beyond the horizon to the post-electoral transition. The newly elected Government will face enormous challenges, and it is paramount that international partners stand ready to resume engagement with the country from day one following the installation of the new, democratically elected authorities. That specifically means providing emergency assistance and support to critical reforms, prior to a pledging conference, which will comprehensively address the overall State-building and development needs of the country.

Fast-tracking reforms in the defence and security sectors, including the urgent modernization of the armed forces, thus fostering civilian oversight, is paramount for stability and democratic governance in Guinea-Bissau. The demobilization and reintegration strategies need to be supported immediately after the elections, along with community-oriented internal security reforms and support to the independence of the judiciary in order to fight impunity, as well as

combating all forms of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

Decades of neglect and instability in Guinea-Bissau have made its institutions ineffective, corroded by corruption and porous to military might. In the post-election period there is a need to start rebuilding the State institutions. A programmatic response is the Government's efficacy amelioration programme. My staff and I have provided our national and international partners with an executive summary of what I believe the international community role should be in assisting Guinea-Bissau on the path of reform, modernization and sustainable development, following the elections.

The temporary co-location of qualified international advisers with co-executive powers in the critical structures of decision-making within the civil service is essential for enduring stability, democratic governance and the development of the country, as it will allow for the confidence of international partners to be gained.

While the reform and modernization of the armed forces and security institutions should remain a key priority for the democratically elected authorities following the general elections, it will also be important to rebuild the other State institutions, notably the judiciary and public administration in general.

I hope that multilateral and regional bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the European Union, United Nations agencies and regional and bilateral partners, will seriously consider the draft strategy now being made available, and promptly begin consultations so as to agree on how best to assist Guinea-Bissau and its legitimate authorities in moving forward with no further ado.

I would propose that a presidential statement reinforcing those key considerations would help our work in the field throughout the ongoing electoral process and beyond.

Finally, I would like to offer some words of gratitude to the staff of the United Nations, both at Headquarters and in the field, and the other international partners working with us in Guinea-Bissau, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, who have always shown great professionalism and dedication.

Madam President, you and all other Council members, as well as the Secretary-General, are always in my prayers. I beg the Almighty and Merciful to continue to bestow on them all endless wisdom as they try to bring peace to our troubled world. May our God bless us all.

The President: I thank Mr. Ramos-Horta for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Patriota.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank you for convening this meeting, Madam President, and for the invitation to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, for his briefing and his outstanding leadership at this very crucial moment of Guinea-Bissau's history.

As has been mentioned, I accepted the invitation from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to visit the country late last month. I take this opportunity to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, all personnel of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their support to the visit. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins for joining me, in a demonstration of her ongoing commitment.

During my four-day visit to Bissau, I spoke with a wide spectrum of interlocutors, including transitional authorities, political actors, civil servants, civil society organizations and international partners. In each of those meetings, I stressed that free and transparent elections and a return to constitutional order were essential for the full resumption of much-needed international cooperation.

I found a country in serious economic distress, in spite of its human and material resources and potential. The consequences of the 2012 coup hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest, and do not seem to have affected its perpetrators in significant ways. It seems that an urgent reflection on the part of the international community is needed to avoid such twisted consequences.

In contacts with international partners I was able to identify a scenario of improved regional and subregional coordination. A positive regional context is a key factor

for stability in Guinea-Bissau. I will continue to work for such positive trends to gain even more traction.

In meetings with various transitional authorities, including in the military, I could observe the very complex realities related to the modernization of the security and defence sectors. While there seems to be a national consensus on the urgency of, and even the main modalities for, the modernization of the security sector, simplistic notions about the role of the military in politics, with little consideration of civil-military relations and the conduct of political elites, are of limited practical assistance.

A more comprehensive approach is necessary. Meaningful modernization entails an adequate understanding of the underlying historical and sociological factors contributing to political instability since independence, and also since the conflict of 1998. It will require sustained support to political dialogue, State reform and the modernization of key State structures, from the police and the judiciary to public administration and services.

Any effective process will have to ensure that no social group or stakeholder be — nor perceive itself as being — relegated to second-class citizenship, and that the various contributions to the process of institutional progress be recognized in a plural and democratic national environment with equal opportunity for all.

International coordination among key actors supporting security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau will remain important. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is positioned to play a central role, including through the strengthened presence of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau. The international community should be ready to rally behind the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's lead and support efforts decisively and swiftly.

I was impressed by the willingness of key regional and international partners in Bissau, such as ECOWAS and the European Union, to heed that call. Following the elections, my own country, Brazil, will reassess the prospects for resumed cooperation in that field.

International crime and drug-trafficking remain major concerns among international interlocutors, in spite of assessments pointing to a relative decline. The issue of irregular fishing and logging licenses was raised by national interlocutors as an emerging challenge. Institutional constraints, the political situation and the lack of law-enforcement resources remain significant obstacles. A focus on increasing transparent revenue-collection and strengthening local capacities to promote social and economic development stands a good chance of garnering support.

I am all the more convinced that impunity in Guinea-Bissau is a result of persistent political instability, weak institutions and unresolved hurdles in civil-military relations. An integrated approach capable of reinforcing national ownership of a renewed commitment to democracy and a more inclusive society will yield the best results.

While in Bissau, I could testify to Timor-Leste's invaluable contribution in support of the voter-registration process. The importance of the registration process transcends the upcoming elections. It enables the exercise of civil and political rights, but can also serve planning and policy-making purposes. I commend the people of Guinea-Bissau for the enthusiasm with which they participated in the registration process, which allowed for a historical expansion of the electorate throughout the country. The next elections therefore have the potential to be the most significant step for the consolidation of democracy in Guinea-Bissau's history.

In the light of the extension of voter registration, the resulting rescheduling of elections does not necessarily imply a lack of commitment. The technical quality of elections, for which the registration process is key, is just as important.

I welcome the election of a new leader of Guinea-Bissau's major party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde. The nomination of candidates by various parties and the success of the registration process in difficult conditions can help to generate positive dynamics for the restoration of democracy, in spite of the many challenges ahead.

I fully concur with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's call on all political actors to overcome their political divides, move to the next phase and march peacefully and decisively to a new chapter in the country's political life without further delay — a new chapter that is possible and in which I believe the PBC can play a constructive strategic role.

On the economic front, the impact of political instability on the economy is devastating. Public

finances are in a very poor state. The withdrawal of international assistance has had a direct impact on public services and economic activity.

Food insecurity in fertile Guinea-Bissau is a glaring contradiction. Dependency on the cashew nut was pointed out as a major challenge. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/105), nearly half of the population relies on cashew nut sales for their primary income. Alternatives aimed at diversifying the economy range from processing cashew nuts, stimulating the production of other crops, including rice, cassava and beans, and promoting fishery, to investments in the mining and tourism sectors. The logistics services sector can play an important role, with the planned construction of a deep-water port in Buba, where natural conditions are favourable.

In the absence of legitimate authorities, I was not able to discuss strategic, long-term peacebuilding priorities with national decision makers. Nevertheless, I would like to present some conclusions that may help provide a strategy for our collective engagement with Guinea-Bissau and measure progress in the peacebuilding agenda, including with a view to engaging with legitimate authorities in future.

First, Guinea-Bissau's international partners, especially those in the region, have a decisive role to play in fostering stability. For that contribution to materialize in the most effective way, strong political coordination is central. That is one clear area for the immediate engagement of the PBC.

Secondly, I wish to highlight the vision of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ramos-Horta of intensive international support to a State-rebuilding programme following the elections. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC can play an important role in supporting the Special Representative's vision.

Thirdly, I would like to propose for further discussion three achievable, modest, medium-term strategic objectives in the institutional, socioeconomic and security areas, which can guide the PBC in its resumed engagement and also contribute to the Council's subsequent deliberations.

On the institutional track, one objective is the completion of a full democratic cycle with a constitutional transfer of power to elected officials. Apart from the strong international political engagement, in which the PBC finds a natural place, that can be supported by technical cooperation in public administration, aligned with the Special Representative's proposals, and support to political dialogue, including through social communication. Let me highlight, in that regard, the importance of sustained engagement by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, including in making technical expertise available. The Security Council plays a key role in that regard by helping ensure that electoral results are respected and continuing to monitor closely the post-electoral political developments.

On the social and economic track, one objective is to make significant strides on social and economic indicators, with a focus on food security and rural development. The World Food Programme should be able to envisage its departure from Guinea-Bissau. Responsible economic diversification is key. The economic empowerment of women, who are responsible for more than 80 per cent of the workforce in cashew nut harvesting, is an essential dimension. Moreover, I was impressed by women's organizations in Guinea-Bissau and the way they bring together different ethnicities, religious denominations and political affiliations under the common objective of economic empowerment. They are obviously an important driving force for peacebuilding efforts.

On the security sector track, an objective is to provide a platform for coordination and strategizing on the international support to the modernization of the security sector. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC can help bring key actors together, deepen the understanding of the political and social dynamics in play and assess the need for comprehensive mechanisms of support to the reintegration of retired military personnel, along with political civil-military dialogue and reconciliation.

Once again, and especially after visiting the country, let me stress that, in contrast with the current crisis, Guinea-Bissau has clear potential as a stable and prosperous nation. With modest resources invested in national capacities, a great deal can be achieved. I was struck by the conversations I had with deeply committed, highly educated officials, dynamic civil society organizations and wise cultural and religious leaders. A pluralistic, peaceful and vibrant society is ready to fully emerge from decades of poverty and instability and deserves our active solidarity.

The President: I thank Ambassador Patriota for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on behalf of my country, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month and assure you of my country's full cooperation and support. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General José Ramos-Horta for his detailed briefing and encourage him to continue his efforts to enable the country to return to constitutional order and thus deal with the major challenges before us in terms of my country's stabilization and development. Those are goals to which the people of Guinea-Bissau aspire. I also welcome the statements by Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and President of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and the statement to be made by Ambassador António Gumende, Permanent Representative of Mozambique and representative of the Executive Secretariat of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). I would like to pay tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire and current Chairman of ECOWAS, for his tireless support to my country throughout this transition process.

I welcome the appointment of Mr. Carlos Moura of Brazil as Special Representative of the CPLP for Guinea-Bissau, and we are very pleased that the coordination between international organizations, in particular ECOWAS and the CPLP, is being increasingly strengthened on the ground.

Since the last coup in Guinea-Bissau, on 12 April 2012, we have been fully aware that the path that will lead us to the restoration of constitutional order will not only be long, but also entail huge sacrifices from the people of Guinea-Bissau, especially the most vulnerable segments of society, namely, young people and women. That is due to the fact that our country depends heavily on the help of its partners, and our major partners have suspended or reduced their cooperation with our country.

Today, at the end of the long journey that plunged the country into significant political, economic and social crisis, we are driven by our strong belief that this is the final phase of the transition period. That period will end, of course, with the realization of the most important recommendation of resolution 2048 (2012), which is the restoration of constitutional order.

After consultations with all the political parties and other national actors, the President decreed that presidential and legislative elections would be held on 13 April 2014, thus confirming the postponement of the elections, which were originally scheduled for 16 March 2014.

This new development in no way reflects a lack of political will on the part of the authorities of the country, but rather is motivated by objective conditions that were not met within the desired time frame. For example, in order be able to identify the largest number of voters possible, and given the logistical difficulties encountered during that process, the electoral census lasted a little over two months instead of 21 days as originally planned, thus missing certain legal deadlines stipulated in Guinea-Bissau's electoral code.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that almost 95 per cent of voters were counted by the census, including the country's diaspora, who, for the first time, will be able to participate in the upcoming election of their leaders. We should note that the electoral registry has never before included such an impressive number of voters.

In that respect, I would like to thank all our partners who, despite the sometimes emergency circumstances in which they were called to intervene, have, through their contributions, enabled this process to be successful. We hope to be able to count on their support during the post-election period. In that connection, I must highlight the examples of solidarity and cooperation received from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Timor-Leste, ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union, among others. We believe that, at the end of this transition process, our cooperative relations with our traditional partners, including Angola, Portugal, Brazil and others, will be further strengthened, thus allowing for a full resumption of our friendly relations based on solidarity.

The elections to be held next April will be a first step in the major challenge that our country faces in the coming years.

Along with the urgent need for the reform and modernization of our defence and security forces, which, incidentally, remains at the top of our priorities, Guinea-Bissau needs close support from the

international community so as to undertake a massive reform of the public administration and establish the essential conditions for the promotion of justice in order to combat impunity, which unfortunately still prevails in our society.

The country's social stability will largely depend, among other things, on the future that we provide for young people and women. In spite of their vulnerability, those two groups represent potentially profitable sectors in the economy if we create for them a climate conducive to their professional development.

The issue of drug trafficking remains another challenge to overcome. My country remains committed to continuing its efforts to eradicate that scourge. However, given the great fragility of our security and justice institutions, among others, as well as the transnational dimension of the phenomenon, regional and international cooperation must be strengthened. Guinea-Bissau is open to all types of cooperation in that field so as to be able to combat that evil.

In that context, we fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General in its latest report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105), according to which the post-election phase should merit special support from the international community in order to build a lasting foundation for our development and stability.

In conclusion, allow me once again to reiterate my country's deep gratitude to the members of the Council and our partners, who have always stood by us throughout this difficult transition stage.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mozambique.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): I would like to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Madam President, on the accession of your country to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February, and to thank you for inviting me to participate and deliver this statement on behalf the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) in this briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, a member of our Community.

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries welcomes the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/105) on the current status of the process leading to the full restoration of constitutional order in that country and the valuable and insightful information provided by His Excellency Mr. Antonio Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, gathered during his recent visit to Bissau, as well as the statement by the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The briefings provided on the latest developments in the country, which the CPLP has been following with keen interest, convey a mixed picture of encouraging progress coupled with the persistence of areas of concern, to which all stakeholders should continue to pay particular attention.

The successful conclusion of the voter registration process and the adoption of a national electoral security plan for 2014 — arrangements aimed at ensuring the holding of credible, inclusive, peaceful, free and fair legislative and presidential elections — constitute a positive development, of which we should take note.

We welcome the preparations by all political parties to participate in the elections, which can be seen as a demonstration of a renewed commitment of those national political actors to the irreversibility of the process of restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

We recognize that such positive developments are in no small measure thanks to the support of the international community for the people of Guinea-Bissau in their endeavours to find a lasting solution to the political crisis precipitated by the coup d'état of April 2012.

We would like to commend the tireless efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, who has done a remarkable job in rebuilding the trust and encouraging sobriety among all stakeholders by managing with zeal, patience and dexterity the numerous and intricate issues that arise in a stabilization process of that nature in a balanced fashion.

Although under the prevailing circumstances one might suppose that a delay in the elections may be reasonable, we must note that we are facing the third successive postponement. That is particularly worrying in a country where the people have been exposed and subjected to all types of suffering and traumas since the onset of the current political crisis two years ago. The international community must continue to impress

upon the current authorities the urgency of holding free, fair and inclusive elections on the new date of 13 April.

Similarly, the recurrent reports of episodes of intimidation, the violation of human rights, the lack of concrete actions to fight impunity and restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and assembly, which create a persisting climate of insecurity, are a cause of concern. Those aspects were plainly visible in the beating of the Minister of Transportation and Communications last November or the serious incident of the forced boarding of passengers with forged documentation on a Bissau-Lisbon Air Portugal flight in December.

The economic and humanitarian situation has deteriorated substantially, posing a threat to the stabilization process on the eve of the elections. The strikes that are taking place over the non-payment of salaries in various economic and social sectors amply demonstrate the underlying seriousness of the situation.

A lasting solution to such problems, among others, requires the continued strong commitment of national stakeholders to the cause of the political stabilization and greater involvement of the international community in supporting the future democratically elected authorities. We must mobilize our efforts to provide to those authorities, if they so require and in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, the security conditions to allow them to implement the necessary reforms in the country that will once and for all pull Guinea-Bissau out of the vicious cycle of recurrent instability.

As part of the long-standing commitment to the Bissau-Guinean people, the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries in January appointed Ambassador Carlos Moura as its Special Representative to Guinea-Bissau. Ambassador Moura has the responsibility to monitor developments and to cooperate with all stakeholders, whenever necessary, until the completion of the electoral process. His deployment represents a concrete, albeit modest, contribution by the CPLP to the efforts of the international community and conveys our sense of permanent solidarity with the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Let me conclude by once again calling upon the international community to continue supporting the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau and to begin preparations to support the future legitimate authorities immediately after their election in the medium- to long-term perspective. The holding of a free, fair, inclusive and credible election, the implementation of its results and the submission of the military to the civilian authorities are the conditions required for the return to constitutional order, in line with the relevant resolutions adopted by this body, in collaboration with the African Union and other international stakeholders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 15 States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I welcome the excellent report by the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, contained in document S/2014/105, dated 14 February 2014.

First of all, as this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in the month of February, allow me, Madam President, to convey my delegation's warm congratulations on Lithuania's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this moth.

I would like to thank His Excellency Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his excellent briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and, above all, for his leadership in managing the crisis in that country. I should likewise like to thank all those who spoke before me — Ambassador Patriota, Ambassador Da Gama and Ambassador Gumende, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. The Economic Community of West African States shares their view that, since the holding of the Council's previous meeting on Guinea-Bissau (see S/PV.7070), the political situation in the country has continued to be marked by the uncertainty generated by the reluctance on the part of the leadership of the Transitional Government to carry out general elections to mark the end of the transition, in line with the decision taken by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

The Transitional Government has justified its inability to meet the transition calendar for a number of reasons. They include a lack of funds to compile electoral and voter registration lists and the issue of district boundaries, which they claim impeded the holding of the elections under optimal conditions by the set date of 24 November 2013. That environment has been aggravated by the interaction among political

actors that led to the breakdown of consensus on the timing of the transition.

Nevertheless, ECOWAS States members, working in close cooperation with the West African Economic and Monetary Union and other members of the international community, were able to secure the necessary funding for the proper conduct of elections. The process of fundraising was concluded in December 2013, which required the extension of the transition period by the National People's Assembly, following extensive consultations among the main political actors. That extension was subsequently endorsed by the transitional authorities and communicated to the Chairman of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government in December 2013. It is for that reason that the date of 16 March 2014 that has been set for the holding of the elections does not seem realistic. I should point out that this is the second time that the deadline for a return to constitutional order has been moved.

General elections are now being proposed for 13 April 2014. In that regard, it should be recalled that voter registration was completed on 8 February, and the voters' list will be available on 4 March. However, according to the Constitution, the elections should take place two months after the publication of the voter list. In addition, two key domestic issues continue unresolved, and they should be addressed urgently in order to avoid derailing the electoral process.

First, according to news reports and sources close to committed members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC), the former Prime Minister has returned to Bissau. Such rumors fuel the palpable unease among the population, certain political circles and the military level, which suggests that his safety cannot be guaranteed.

Secondly, we note that the PAIGC neither held its congress nor appointed a presidential candidate before the end of the period set by the National Electoral Commission. Moreover, some members of the Transitional Government have indicated interest in standing as presidential candidates.

Given those circumstances, and because of the slow pace of the efforts under way to hold the elections, it is clear that more time is needed for the transitional authorities to conduct truly credible and transparent elections. In any event, I would suggest that ECOWAS provide technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission and the directorate-general for technical support to the electoral process office, within the Ministry of Administration of Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, an ECOWAS technical team has provided assistance in organizing meetings with key stakeholders, setting up a timetable, revising the budget for the elections, supervising registration activities and training regional staff of the Electoral Commission. In addition, the team has contributed to greater coordination, collaboration and synergy between the National Commission and the directorate, including organizing technical coordination meetings to exchange ideas on improving the electoral process in the country.

I would like to point out that ECOWAS also provides assistance to Guinea-Bissau in the context of reform of the security and defence sectors. The ECOWAS team on that front, made up of a coordinator and six other experts, was deployed in Guinea-Bissau at the end of December 2013. The team has both short- and long-term objectives that are aimed at modernizing the defence and security sectors by improving the legal framework and through capacity-building with regard to human and material resources.

With regard to the status of defence and security-sector reform, a completion rate of 18 per cent with respect to the rehabilitation of selected barracks has been achieved. Discussions are continuing on the implementation of a pension scheme and a stipend for veterans and retirees. Training needs have been identified, with training having been provided at ECOWAS training centres of excellence on the basis of the needs of the restructured armed forces of Guinea-Bissau.

I would also like to point out that ECOWAS is committed to supporting Guinea-Bissau to ensure security for the upcoming elections. In that regard, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) held coordination meetings on the issue of security with the Chairman and Commissioners of the National Electoral Commission, alongside other security agencies.

In addition, in cooperation with local authorities and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, ECOMIB is supporting local authorities to ensure the security of election materials and escort election materials from the central warehouse to the various regions and sectors, in collaboration with the National Electoral Commission, the United Nations

Development Programme and local security agencies. ECOMIB is also helping to generate mobile emergency teams to intervene in polling stations where individuals or groups of individuals attempt to interfere with the proper conduct of elections. It is also helping to ensure the safety of election observers from ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations and other agencies that request it, without prejudice to the responsibility of the authorities of Guinea-Bissau. ECOMIB is working to deploy sectoral mobile teams to report in real time — every 30 minutes — on the situation on the ground at their respective locations so as to provide alerts on any incident that could disturb public order or threaten the success of the elections. It is also helping to identify and arrest individuals or groups who plan or attempt to disrupt the elections, so as to transfer such individuals to the nearest police station or National Guard office.

I want to conclude by inviting the international community to join their efforts with those of ECOWAS in order to help Guinea-Bissau to hold, in the best of conditions, free, fair, transparent and credible elections so as to enable the country to finally experience stability and lasting peace.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7122

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 February 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7122nd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 27 February 2014, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to the representative of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

"In accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard, the President, with the consent of the Council, extended an invitation to the representative of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting.

"The members of the Council had an exchange of views."

14-24854 (E) 270214

Please recycle

United Nations S/PV.7123

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 February 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7123rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 28 February 2014, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 7123rd meeting, held in private on 28 February 2014, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)'.

"The President invited the representative of Ukraine to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The President invited Mr. Oscar Fernández-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council heard a briefing by Mr. Fernández-Taranco.

"The Security Council heard a statement by the representative of Ukraine."

14-24976 (E) 280214

Please recycle

United Nations S/PV.7124

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7124th meeting
Saturday, 1 March 2014, 4.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-25030 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in the month of March 2014, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, for her service as President of the Council during the month of February. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of the members of the Council in expressing my sincere thanks to Ambassador Murmokaitė and her delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they guided the work of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I welcome the presence among us today of the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Since the Council was briefed yesterday by Assistant Secretary-General Fernández-Taranco (see S/PV.7123), there have been reports of continued serious developments in Ukraine. In Crimea, key sites such as airports, communications and public buildings, including the regional parliament, reportedly continue to be blocked by unidentified armed men. There are further reports of armed personnel taking control of regional administration buildings in several cities in the East and South of Ukraine.

The new Crimean Prime Minister, Sergei Aksenov, today released a statement appealing to President Vladimir Putin to provide assistance in "ensuring peace and tranquillity on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea". In the same statement, he announced that he was taking control of security in Crimea "on a temporary basis". He told all security personnel to declare allegiance to him rather than to the authorities of Kiev. Following the reported deployment of additional Russian troops and armoured vehicles to Crimea, the Russian Federation's upper house of Parliament today approved the request of President Putin for Russian forces to be used in Ukraine "pending the normalization of the public and political situation in that country".

At the same time, in this fluid situation, however, there are some encouraging signs. One of them is the reported announcement from Kiev just now of the intention to broaden the Government to include representatives from eastern Ukraine. We also note that the calls for dialogue among all other interested parties, both inside and outside Ukraine, appear to be resonating.

Referring to the Security Council discussions yesterday about Robert Serry's fact-finding mission and his possible visit to Crimea, Mr. Serry was in touch with the authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. He came to the conclusion that a visit to Crimea today was not possible for logistical reasons. In his statement today, Mr. Serry noted that if he had travelled to Crimea, he would have conveyed, on behalf of the Secretary-General, a message for all to calm the situation down and to refrain from any actions that could further escalate an already tense environment. Robert Serry will travel to Geneva today, where he will brief the Secretary-General on his mission to Ukraine and discuss further possible steps.

The Secretary-General is gravely concerned that the situation has further deteriorated since yesterday's meeting of the Council. In that regard, let me reiterate the Secretary-General's important messages, conveyed in his statement of today:

> "The Secretary-General continues to closely follow the seriously and rapidly unfolding events in Ukraine, including developments in Crimea, and is gravely concerned about the deterioration of the situation.
>
> "The Secretary-General reiterates his call for the full respect for and preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
>
> "He calls for an immediate restoration of calm and direct dialogue between all concerned to solve the current crisis.

"The Secretary-General will be speaking with President Vladimir Putin of Russia shortly about the situation in Ukraine."

Let me say in closing that at this crucial moment it is important to recall the mission of the Organization. It always seeks the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is the essence of the Charter of the United Nations and should serve as our primary guide in this situation. Now is the time for cool heads to prevail.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I thank you very much, Madam, for agreeing to have this meeting at such short notice. I thank Mr. Eliasson for his comments and for presenting to us the statement of the Secretary-General, which is very promising. What I am going to say now, including the recent information about the developments in Ukraine, in particular in Crimea, was sent to all the missions this afternoon.

The situation continues to deteriorate. As I said yesterday (see S/PV.7123), Russian troops illegally entered the territory of Ukraine in the Crimean peninsula on the ambiguous pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine. A few hours ago, the upper house of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council, unanimously authorized the use of military force against Ukraine upon the request of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, but the troops are already there and their number is increasing every hour.

However, such action by the Russian Federation constitutes an act of aggression against the State of Ukraine and a severe violation of international law, posing a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country, as well as peace and stability in the whole region. The Russian Federation is not complying with its obligations as a State guarantor of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum, obliging Russia, as well as other permanent members of the Security Council, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a dangerous challenge to the very principle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Russia officially rejected the Ukrainian proposal to hold immediate bilateral consultations under article 7 of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation of 1997. The Russian Federation has brutally violated the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, obliging all Member States, inter alia, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Facing the announced military intervention in Ukraine, the Government of Ukraine requested that this meeting of the Security Council be held. We call upon the Security Council to do everything possible now to stop aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. There is still a chance.

Ukraine calls on the guarantor States to react immediately in order to prevent intervention. We call for international monitors of the situation in Ukraine with regard to the aggression of the Russian Federation. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate solidarity with the Ukrainian nation to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and the very basic principles of the United Nations, currently brutally violated by a permanent member of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express my sympathy to you, Madam President, because under your presidency we have just wasted two hours discussing the format for this meeting. We agreed that only three people would speak in an open format: Mr. Eliasson, my Ukrainian colleague Mr. Sergeyev, and the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation. As I understand it, some of my Security Council colleagues already intend to depart from that agreement, but what can we do when there is a game without rules?

I would like to thank Mr. Eliasson for his briefing and I support his conclusion that, in the current situation, cool heads must prevail. Unfortunately, I must note that my Ukrainian colleague did not choose to follow that advice, and what I heard in his statement was a number of terms characterizing the situation in Ukraine and the actions of the Russian Federation to which we cannot agree at all.

We are discussing a crisis that should not have taken place. There was no objective reason whatsoever for it to happen. There was and remains our fraternal country of Ukraine, our neighbour. If we talk about this in terms

of the situation last autumn, it has a democratically and legally elected President, Mr. Yanukovych. He undertakes his functions on basis of the parliamentary majority in a democratically elected Parliament. His country is certainly dealing with serious economic challenges, and the leadership of Ukraine had serious decisions to make. In particular, it needed to decide whether to join or sign an association agreement with the European Union. That is a complex decision. One of the mistakes made the Ukrainian leadership was perhaps its last-minute recognition that this association agreement could have significant economic consequences for Ukraine.

In such conditions, the Ukrainian leader, President Yanukovych, took a completely constitutional decision that was fully in line with the prerogatives of the Head of any State, namely, to refrain from signing an association agreement with the European Union. That did not mean, as many have said, that there was a complete repudiation of a European orientation; he simply had to weigh the circumstances that had arisen at that time. Therefore, I repeat, his decision was fully within the prerogatives of the Ukrainian leadership.

This raises a question: Why did that problem need to result in street demonstrations? Why do those street demonstrations need to be encouraged from abroad by members of the European Union? Why did the representatives of several countries of the European Union need to appear at those meetings, which were ignited by protests against a decision taken by the Ukrainian leadership? Why did some officials need to talk about stirring up the public and opposition leaders? Why did there have to be such crude interventions in the internal affairs of a sovereign State?

There is another question that must be asked. I do not want to condone the actions of President Yanukovych during the crisis in reaction to the protests. Many things could be said in that regard, but I will just reiterate the facts. A leader of the opposition, Mr. Yatsenyuk, was offered the post of Prime Minister. Why did he not accept that proposal? Why continue to escalate the situation? Mr. Yatsenyuk could have formed a Government. If he had wanted to sign an association agreement with the European Union, he could have — and then he would have been responsible for the catastrophic economic consequences for the country if he had done so. Moreover, there will be presidential elections in Ukraine in 2015, and if the people do not like President Yanukovych's position, they can elect another President. That has happened before. Mr. Yanukovych lost an election and other Presidents were elected in Ukraine.

Why continue to whip up the situation? Why are some of our Western colleagues trying to prolong the confrontation? Why are they bringing armed militants into the streets? Why do those armed militants need to throw Molotov cocktails at the police? Why are they going after the police? Have we heard any censure of these activities from the Western supporters of democracy in Ukraine? We, for one, have heard not one word from any of the many institutions that promote democracy. It is therefore unclear why they even exist, if they do not react to such manifestations.

As a result of the emergence of the crisis, an agreement between President Yanukovych and the opposition was signed on 21 February. It contained the signatures of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany, France and Poland. It was a very important agreement. At a later stage, it would have provided an opportunity to defuse the crisis. Under the agreement, a national unity Government was to be formed within 10 days, constitutional reforms were to be undertaken, a new constitution was to be adopted, and presidential elections were to be held by December 2014. The opposition and its leaders pledged not use force. They were to surrender their weapons to whomever was supposed to keep them.

Why was that agreement not implemented? Why were threats aimed at President Yanukovych that resulted in his having to leave Kiev? Why, with all the traumatic changes that have taken place, was the first action of the Ukrainian Parliament and its new membership a decision to change the law on language, which accorded Ukrainian minority communities — not only Russians but others as well — the right to use their own languages? Why was that decision taken the very first day? This was not the result of a political coalition or process. One opposition leader sought to assert himself, claimed victory and tried to impose his will on the people. I would not venture to estimate their numbers, but there are a number of political groups whose membership includes radical extremists working in the field of Ukrainian security.

What has occurred over the past few days, which is the reason for our meeting today? A very difficult situation has arisen in Crimea and the eastern part of Ukraine in recent days. There has been a lot of concern,

and in Crimea in particular. People have come in from Kiev with the clear intention of repeating what they have done in Kiev and in the western Ukraine by replacing the regional governments. That has created great concern in the eastern part of the country, especially in the Republic of Crimea.

In those circumstances, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Crimea, Mr. Aksyonov, made a statement that was referenced today by Mr. Eliasson, in which he said:

> "In spite of the agreement that was reached with the central authorities concerning the inadmissibility of the appointment of leaders of power structures without the consent of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, in violation of the norms of the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Ukrainian laws governing the police, yesterday, 28 February, Mr. Igor Avrutsky was appointed chief of the local Crimean militia. That appointment, the presence of unidentified armed groups and military equipment, and the inability of the power structures of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to effectively control the situation on the territory of the Republic have led to disorder and the use of firearms."

I will now quote the statement issued today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia.

> "On the night of 1 March, unknown armed people sent from Kiev attempted to storm the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. As a result of those perfidious provocations, there were casualties. The decisive action of self-defence groups prevented the attempt to overrun the Ministry. These developments confirm the aspirations of certain well-known political circles in Kiev to destabilize the situation on the peninsula. It is very irresponsible to stir up tensions in the Crimea, which is already very tense."

In those conditions, Mr. Aksyonov, Prime Minister of Crimea, went to the President of Russia with a request for assistance to restore peace in Crimea. According to available information, the appeal was also supported by Mr. Yanukovych, whose removal from office, we believe, was illegal. As a result of that appeal, the President of Russia, in accordance with our constitutional procedures, sent to the Federation Council the following request.

> "With respect to the extraordinary situation in Ukraine and threats against the lives of Russian citizens, our compatriots, and members of the military contingent of the armed forces of the Russian Federation deployed in conformity with international agreement on the territory of Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea — in accordance with paragraph (g) of part I of article 102 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation — has requested the deployment of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine until the civic and political situation in Ukraine can be normalized".

I therefore draw the Council's attention to the fact that it says "on the territory of Ukraine" — not "against Ukraine", as my Ukrainian colleague said, but "on the territory of Ukraine until the civic and political situation in Ukraine can be normalized". In recent reports that I have received, including the statement issued by the press representative of the President of the Russian Federation, the President of the Russian Federation has not taken a decision on the use of armed forces on the territory of Ukraine.

With regard to how to get out of this situation, I repeat, as Mr. Eliasson said quite correctly, that cooler heads must prevail and we must return to the political path in the constitutional framework. We need to go back to the agreement of 21 February and establish a national unity Government, and we need to put an end to attempts to converse with our ethnic or political opponents in the language of force. The international factors that are especially interested in the situation in Ukraine need to call the radicals to order. They must advise the Ukrainian opposition, or whoever happens to be in Kiev, to distance itself from the radicals and not allow them to lord it over Ukraine, as such actions could lead to very difficult developments, which is what the Russian Federation is trying to avoid.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States renews our call for the international community to support the newly formed Government of Ukraine and to prevent unnecessary violence.

I would like to take a moment to respond to the comments made here by the representative of the Russian Federation. Actions speak louder than words. Early this morning, the Russian Duma acted to authorize the use of military force in Ukraine. This is as dangerous as it is destabilizing. We are deeply

disturbed by reports this morning of Russian military intervention into Crimea. This intervention is without legal basis; indeed, it violates Russia's commitment to protecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.

It is time for the Russian intervention in Ukraine to end. The Russian military must stand down, the aspirations of the Ukrainian people must be respected, and political dialogue must be allowed to continue. We applaud the remarkable restraint and commitment to that dialogue that the new Ukrainian Government in Kiev has demonstrated in the face of hostility.

We have said from the outset that we recognize and respect Russia's historical ties to Ukraine, but instead of engaging the Government of Ukraine and international institutions about its concerns for ethnic Russians, Russia has ignored both, and has instead acted unilaterally and militarily. It is ironic that the Russian Federation regularly goes out of its way in this Chamber to emphasize the sanctity of national borders and of sovereignty, but Russian actions in Ukraine are violating the sovereignty of Ukraine and pose a threat to peace and security.

Russia alleges various actions against and threats to minority groups in Ukraine. We see no evidence of such actions yet, but Russia's provocative actions could easily push a tense situation beyond the breaking point. Russia's incitement of groups to come out to protest is not responsible behaviour in the present situation. There is a clear way forward that would preserve Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and address Russia's concerns.

First, Russia should directly engage the Government of Ukraine. Secondly, international monitors and observers, including from the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), should be sent to Ukraine. That is the best way to get the facts, monitor conduct and prevent any abuses. Russia is a leading member of both institutions and can participate actively to ensure that its interests are upheld. The immediate deployment of international observers from either the OSCE or the United Nations to Crimea would also provide transparency about the movements and activities of military and paramilitary forces in the region, and defuse the tensions between different groups. We are also working to stand up an international mediation mission to the Crimea to begin to de-escalate the situation and facilitate productive and peaceful political dialogue among all Ukrainian parties.

Our paramount concerns are to end the confrontation and to find a solution that allows the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny, their own Government and their own future. That must be the goal of the Council and the international community. The United States will work with Ukraine, our allies and partners in Europe and around the world, and here at the United Nations to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and democratic future of Ukraine.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): As the Permanent Representative of Russia has suggested that some European Union (EU) member States were somehow involved in making the crisis in Ukraine worse, I should like to set out clearly my Government's position.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the escalation of tensions in the Crimea peninsula and by the fact that the Russian Parliament has authorized Russian military action on Ukrainian soil against the wishes of the Ukrainian Government. That action is a grave threat to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We condemn any act of aggression against Ukraine. We have therefore sought an immediate and full explanation from the Russian Federation for the decision to authorize military action on sovereign Ukrainian soil, and of the basis for it under international law.

Earlier today, my Prime Minister called on all parties to think carefully about their actions and to work to lower, not escalate, tensions. Yesterday, my Foreign Secretary spoke to Ukrainian acting President Turchynov, and made clear the United Kingdom's support for Ukraine's new Government. He urged him to ensure that the Government take measures that unify the country and that it protect the rights of Ukraine's citizens, including those from minority groups, in a spirit of inclusiveness. And he assured him of the United Kingdom's commitment to Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty.

The United Kingdom Government support the Ukrainian Government's request for urgent consultations, in accordance with the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, signed by the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia and Ukraine. We see no reason why these consultations should not take place immediately.

Yesterday, the Council expressed support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and agreed that all political actors should show restraint. It is critical that the Russian Federation respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and take immediate steps to calm this dangerous situation.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): Since the current crisis began, France has worked towards a solution promoting the stabilization of a democratic Ukraine in which the rights of all communities are respected and which is part of the broader European family. This was the aim of the mediation efforts carried out by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Poland and France. It was the aim of the agreement of 21 February, which the Russian Federation refused to support at the time.

The situation before us today is not a modern-day geopolitical spat. This is not a situation in which Ukraine is being forced to choose between East and West, which would go against all of the values on which the European Union is founded. I recall that the Union's very existence is based on the rejection of such practices of another age, which twice left our continent in ruins in the course of a single century.

The authorization given by the Council of the Russian Federation to deploy troops in Ukraine could, if acted upon, be seen as a threat to the territorial integrity of the country and would be a dangerous development for peace. In the Ukrainian crisis, France will continue to strive for a political solution that meets the needs of the Ukrainian people and preserves the territorial integrity and sovereignty of that country.

We therefore call on all parties involved to show their sense of responsibility. We call on the Ukrainian authorities to take all measures necessary to ensure civil peace and intercommunal coexistence, to restore the country and to take the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation into account. We expect all of Ukraine's neighbours to assist it in this difficult task.

France and the European Union stand ready to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the crisis. The President of the French Republic has called for swift and coordinated action from the European Union, which will be determined at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 3 March.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.